

Wolverhampton & Black Country

ISSUE 435 APRIL 2023

What's On

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**'HALLELUJAH!
A HEAVENLY REVIVAL'**
Independent

**'IT'S THE MOST JOYFUL SHOW
I'VE SEEN ALL YEAR,
BAR NUN!'**
The Sun

Sister Act
A DIVINE MUSICAL COMEDY

★★★★★ Daily Mail ★★★★★ Sunday Mirror
★★★★★ Sunday Express ★★★★★ Whatsonstage

Musical by Alan Menken Lyrics by Glenn Slater Book by Cheri Steinkellner & Bill Steinkellner Additional Book Material by Douglas Carter Beane
Based on the Touchstone Pictures Motion Picture "Sister Act" written by Joseph Howard

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GRAND
THEATRE

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inside:

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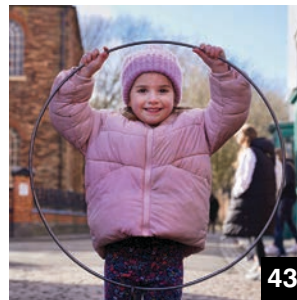
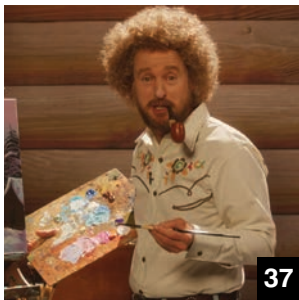
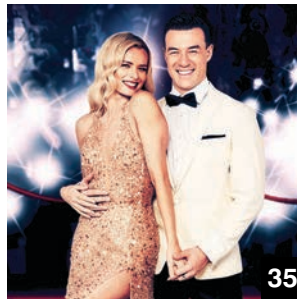
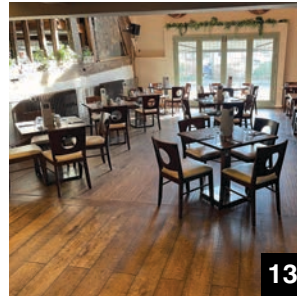
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INSIDE:

First Word	4
Food	13
Gigs	17
Comedy	19
Theatre	22
Dance	35
Film	36
Visual Arts	38
Events	41

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What's On

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The Potting Podcaster at Shrewsbury Flower Show

Birmingham-based gardening enthusiast Adam Kirtland will bring his View From The Potting Bench podcast to this year's Shrewsbury Flower Show.

Describing himself as someone who 'eats, sleeps and breathes plants', Adam will share his passion for all things gardening at the popular event, which takes place in Quarry Park on Friday 11 & Saturday 12 August. Organisers have also revealed that ABBA tribute Watch That Scene will take to the main stage on the Friday evening to perform a medley of the Swedish super troupers' greatest hits. For tickets and further announcements, visit shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk

Penkridge's open-air music festival to return

Penkridge Open Air Music Festival will return for a third year this summer.

Taking place at the Staffordshire village's Sports & Recreation Centre from 7 to 9



July, the event features 'some of the UK's best tribute acts' and a host of performers from the 1990s and noughties, including Boyzlife, N Trance, Chico, Big Brovaz and Booty Luv. The festival also features a family fun day, including appearances by Basil Brush and Fireman Sam. For more information and to book tickets, visit penkridgeopenair.co.uk

New Vic to present The Nutcracker at Christmas

Staffordshire's New Vic Theatre has announced that its Christmas production will be a new adaptation of The Nutcracker. Showing at the Newcastle-under-Lyme venue from Friday 17 November to Saturday 27 January, the show will be helmed by the New Vic's artistic director, Theresa Heskins. "The ambition to do a stage play of The Nutcracker is one I've treasured for some time," says Theresa. "I want to bring together ETA Hoffman's original story with the adaptation by Alexandre Dumas and Tchaikovsky's music into a new play telling the story of the enchanted Nutcracker, who takes a journey up the Christmas tree to the Kingdom of Sweets to settle a score with the ferocious Mouse Queen. It's going to be a gripping story that's absolutely jam-packed

with magic, beautiful music and Christmas sparkle."

For more information about The Nutcracker: A Christmas Fairytale, and to book tickets, visit newvictheatre.org.uk

Krazy Races are back!

Krazy Races is returning to Wolverhampton this summer (Monday 28 August).

Organisers of the popular soapbox-racing get-together are looking for 'a good mix of competitors' to take part, with places available for up to 40 teams.



Commenting on the event, its founder, Sarah Belcher, said: "We are over the moon to be coming back to Wolverhampton later this year. We absolutely loved last year's Krazy Races and are still buzzing about the overwhelming positive feedback.

"We hope that teams and businesses really get behind this event and join in the fun." Teams wishing to participate are encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible, to secure their place in the event. Full details about how to enter are available by visiting the website: krazyraces.co.uk

Heal Festival a first for Shropshire Music Awards

The grand final of the 2023 Shropshire Music Awards will be held during this year's Heal Festival, taking place at Shrewsbury's West Mid Showground from Friday 30 June to

Sunday 2 July.

Launched last year, the awards - which celebrate and promote the local music industry and regional talent - will form part of a festival line-up that also features more than 80 acts & artists, including The Enemy, CAST, The Slow Readers Club and the Dub Pistols.

As with the music awards - the grand final of which takes place on the Friday night - Heal is also in its second year. The event was set up 'to help celebrate what unites us, whilst fundraising for local charities'.

For more information and to book tickets, visit healfestival.co.uk

Comedy fit for a king...

Shropshire Drama Company (SDC) is this month touring a self-penned comedy celebrating the King's forthcoming coronation.

Written by SDC member Michele Rowland-Jones and entitled 42 Crowns, the show visits The Red House, Albrighton (Saturday 8 April), Montford Parish Hall, near Shrewsbury (on Friday the 21st), Hermon Chapel Arts Centre, Oswestry (Saturday the 22nd) and Montgomery Town Hall, Powys (Saturday the 29th). For more information and to book your seat, visit wegottickets.com/42crowns



Pete Firman to star in flagship gala show

Comedy magician Pete Firman has been added to the line-up of talent performing in Shrewsbury International Comedy Festival's (SICF) Gala Show this summer.

The highlight of SICF, the Gala will take place at the town's Theatre Severn on the evening of Sunday 16 July.

The four-day festival will also include performances by other comedians at various venues throughout the town.

For tickets for the Gala show, head to: theatresevern.co.uk

New arts festival for Wolves

Wolverhampton is hosting its first-ever major arts festival next month, in the city's newly pedestrianised Victoria Street.

The event will be held across the coronation weekend of Friday 5 to Sunday 7 May.

Attractions include live performances, art demonstrations, music, dance and workshops...

For more information, or if you want to get involved, email: Wolverhampton.arts.festival@outlook.com

Russell Watson at the Abbey

Award-winning tenor Russell Watson will bring his Magnificent Buildings concert series to Shrewsbury Abbey in the autumn.

Accompanied by pianist Mike Morgan, Russell will perform 'classic songs, old and new, plus a selection of hits from his illustrious career'.

The concert takes place at the Abbey on Saturday 18 November.

For more information, visit: russellwatson.com



Smash-hit West End musical to stop off in the Midlands

Smash-hit West End musical *The Drifters Girl* will stop off at two Midlands theatres next year. Telling the story of *The Drifters* - one of the most successful vocal groups of all time - and Faye Treadwell, the woman who played a big part in their success, the show features a series of hit songs, including *Saturday Night At The Movies*, *Stand By Me*, *Under The Boardwalk* and *Save The Last Dance For Me*.

The Drifters Girl played to packed houses in London and will head out on tour this September. The musical shows at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, from 16 to 20 January 2024. It then returns to the region to play Birmingham Hippodrome from 16 to 20 April. The cast is yet to be announced. For more information and to book tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com



Peter Pan Goes Wrong at Wolverhampton Grand

Mischief Theatre's hit show, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong*, will visit the Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton later in the year as part of a UK tour.

Offering a comedy twist on JM Barrie's classic tale, the show will be crossing the country in celebration of its 10th anniversary.

Commenting on the news, Mischief's creative director, Jonathan Sayer, said: "I'm absolutely delighted that *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* will be returning to bring joy across the country. It's such a special show for us and includes some of our most ambitious comic sequences to date."

The show stops off at the Grand from 30 October to 4 November.

For more information and to book tickets, visit mischiefcomedy.com

Nitin and Kate to star at Lichfield Festival 2023

Artist, composer & producer Nitin Sawhney and folk singer-songwriter Kate Rusby are among the artists who'll be contributing to this summer's Lichfield Festival. The pair have been announced in a line-up that also features Broadway star Melissa Errico, the Brodsky Quartet, pianist James Pearson, violinist & vocalist Lizzie Ball, and Julian Lloyd Webber hosting and curating a cello concert performed by his wife, Jiaxin. To find out more about this year's get-together, taking place at various venues across the city from 6 to 16 July, visit lichfieldfestival.org

Train to be a pilot at the RAF Museum this Easter

Calling all future pilots aged four and over... the Royal Air Force Museum Midlands is offering the chance to train like a Second World War RAF pilot this Easter. The venue's Pilot Training programme runs from 1 to 16 April and will see each budding young pilot undertake a variety of challenges - from basic flying training and strategic decision-making, to keeping their nerve when flying over enemy lines. For more information and to book tickets, visit rafmuseum.org/midlands



History of land rights and protest explored through folk song and story...

Shrewsbury Unitarian Church is this month hosting a show which aims to connect the Norman Conquest and Peasants' Revolt with a raft of current issues, including the housing crisis, reparations, climate breakdown and food sovereignty. Titled Three Acres And A Cow - and showing at the venue on Sunday 2 April - the production is described as 'part TED talk, part history lecture, part folk-club singalong, part poetry slam and part storytelling session'. Visit threeacresandacow.co.uk for more information.



It's Madness (and plenty more) in local forest...

Popular outdoor-concert series Forest Live will make a welcome return to Staffordshire's Cannock Chase Forest in June. Presented by Forestry England, the series aims to introduce forests 'to new audiences in unique, natural woodland arenas around the country'. More than two million people have attended a Forest Live gig since the series began 22 years ago. The money raised from the concerts helps Forestry England grow trees, create new spaces for people to enjoy and

run important conservation projects. This year's Cannock Chase Forest gigs are as follows: Madness + special guest Hollie Cook and support The Hawkmen, Thursday 8 June; Paul Weller with special guests Far From Saints and guest support Seb Lowe, Friday 9 June; Tom Grennan + guests, Saturday 10 June; Jack Savoretti plus special guest Natalie Imbruglia, Sunday 11 June. For further information and to book tickets, visit forestryengland.uk/music

Acclaimed ghost story set for an autumn return

Susan Hill's acclaimed ghost story, The Woman In Black, is making a welcome return to the Midlands. Stephen Mallatratt's ingenious stage adaptation, which is now celebrating three decades in the West End, will kick-start an autumn tour with four days at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre (Wednesday 6 - Saturday 9 September). It then returns to the region in 2024, visiting Birmingham's The Alexandra from Monday 5 to Saturday 10 February... For more information and to book tickets, visit thewomaninblack.com




Drag Race royalty at Wolverhampton Pride


DJ Scott Mills, RuPaul's Drag Race royalty Baga Chipz and Eurovision stars The Fizz will headline this year's Wolverhampton Pride. Returning to the city's Old Market Square on Saturday 10 June, the festival also includes performances by the UK's first openly transgender rapper - Nate Ethan Watson - and classic tribute Elton Fantastic. Money raised from ticket sales will be donated to local Wolverhampton LGBT-plus charities. For more details, check out Wolverhampton Pride's Facebook page.

There's something for everyone at **Symphony Hall** and **Town Hall**

The Spectacular Music of Harry Potter
Sat 1 Apr
Symphony Hall



Fran Lebowitz
Thu 20 Apr
Town Hall



Hey Duggee The Live Theatre Show
Mon 10 – Wed 12 Apr
Town Hall




B:Classical 2022/23: Iceland Symphony Orchestra
Fri 21 Apr
Symphony Hall



Ryan Adams
Tue 11 Apr
Symphony Hall



B:Classical 2022/23: Pavel Haas Quartet
Fri 28 Apr
Town Hall




Paul Simon's 'Graceland' reimagined by The London African Gospel Choir
Fri 14 Apr
Town Hall



Black Voices: The Sound of Black Britain
Sun 4 Jun
Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space



Ben Portsmouth: This is Elvis
Sat 15 Apr
Town Hall



Mnozil Brass: Gold
Fri 16 Jun
Symphony Hall



Book Online: **bmusic.co.uk**

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THE MOUSETRAP

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REGENT THEATRE



THE ROCK MUSICAL BASED ON THE 1988 FILM!
HEATHERS THE MUSICAL

TUE 11 – SAT 15 APR
REGENT THEATRE



BRINGING THE MUSIC OF JEFF LYNNE AND THE ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA TO THE STAGE
THE ELO EXPERIENCE

SAT 22 APR
REGENT THEATRE



BASED ON REAL PEOPLE ABOARD THE MOST LEGENDARY SHIP IN THE WORLD
TITANIC THE MUSICAL

MON 24 – SAT 29 APR
REGENT THEATRE



THE CHILDHOOD FAVOURITE THAT WON THE HEARTS OF THE WEST END
ANNIE

MON 8 – SAT 13 MAY
REGENT THEATRE



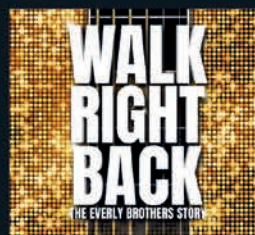
CELEBRATE THE MUSIC OF THE DUBLINERS
SEVEN DRUNKEN NIGHTS

FRI 19 MAY
REGENT THEATRE



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JOHANNES RADEBE – FREEDOM UNLEASHED

SAT 20 MAY
REGENT THEATRE



WALK RIGHT BACK – THE EVERLY BROTHERS STORY

SUN 21 MAY
REGENT THEATRE



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SAT 27 MAY
REGENT THEATRE



MULTI AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY PRODUCTION
THE KING AND I

TUE 30 MAY – SAT 3 JUN
REGENT THEATRE

LUTHER – LUTHER VANDROSS CELEBRATION
SAT 1 APR | VICTORIA HALL

SCOTT BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX – LIFE IN THE PAST LANE TOUR
THU 20 APR | VICTORIA HALL

MIKE AND THE MECHANICS REFUELED!
SUN 23 APR | VICTORIA HALL

THE ROCKET MAN – A TRIBUTE TO SIR ELTON JOHN
SAT 29 APR | VICTORIA HALL

HELLO AGAIN – THE NEIL DIAMOND SONGBOOK
SAT 24 JUN | VICTORIA HALL

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM
FRI 7 JUL | VICTORIA HALL

THE DRIFTERS
SAT 22 JUL | VICTORIA HALL

THE GREATEST HITS OF MOTOWN – HOW SWEET IT IS
SAT 12 AUG | VICTORIA HALL

RV REGENT THEATRE
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*Fees apply.

Summer course set to inspire backstage talent...

The New Vic Theatre in Staffordshire will this summer host a one-week course for emerging and entry-level theatre personnel from under-represented groups. Titled Kiln Sparks and running from Monday 26 to Friday 30 June, the course will provide participants with the chance to gain experience working in the venue.

Queen of British Soul heading back home at 50

Beverley Knight is bringing her biggest-ever UK tour to the Midlands to celebrate clocking up a half-century.

Born and raised in Wolverhampton, the Queen of British Soul, who turned 50 last month, will stop off at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on Saturday 4 November. She then visits the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent the following week (Friday the 10th). For more information and to book tickets, visit atgtickets.com



Trees of Life to honour service and sacrifice...

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire has created a living tribute to the people who served the country throughout the coronavirus pandemic. The venue's new 'Trees of Life' glade will also serve as a way of remembering everybody who died in the UK as a result of Covid-19. The glade features a large central Spaeth Alder tree, set within a sculpted seating area, and also includes trees blessed at Westminster Abbey during a special Service of Remembrance last autumn.



New Adventures for Bourne's Edward Scissorhands

Sir Matthew Bourne's dance company, New Adventures, will next year bring the critically acclaimed choreographer's hit show, Edward Scissorhands, back to the Midlands as part of a brand-new UK tour.

Stopping off at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 6 to Saturday 10 February, the much-loved production is based on the same-named film by director Tim Burton and premiered back in 2005.

Commenting on news of the tour, Sir

Matthew said: "I've always been attracted by 'outsider' stories in my work, and Edward Scissorhands is the ultimate 'outsider' story. Its tale of how we treat people who we perceive as being 'different' in our communities has never been more timely, so I'm delighted to be bringing it back after an absence of nine years to theatres throughout the UK."

To find out more about the show and book tickets, visit birminghamhippodrome.com

New exhibition celebrates Black Arts Movement

A new exhibition at Wolverhampton Art Gallery will tell the story of a group of students who were instrumental in shaping the British 'Black Arts Movement'.

Hosting the First National Convention of Black Art at Wolverhampton Polytechnic in 1982, the students became known as the Blk Art Group. The exhibition runs from Thursday 20 April to Monday 22 May.

Line-up announced for Crooked House festival

Music festival Crooked House In The Park will return to Lichfield's Beacon Park this summer.

Taking place at the venue on Sunday 27 August, the event will see some of house, drum & bass and UK garage's 'most influential and time-honoured acts' playing across six stages. Groove Armada top the bill... For more information and to book tickets, visit crookedhouseevents.com

Access all areas at the Severn Valley Railway

The Severn Valley Railway is holding an Open House Weekend on Saturday 1 & Sunday 2 April.

As well as the chance to experience the golden age of rail travel along the scenic line from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth, visitors will also be able to get a rare peek behind the scenes at the railway.

To find out more, visit svr.co.uk

Church to host Steampunk Spectacular

Shrewsbury Steampunk Spectacular makes a welcome return at the town's St Mary's Church on Saturday 15 April.

The popular get-together features a market, 'extensive' daytime entertainment and an evening 'shindig/cabaret'. For further information about the event, visit chantillygrey.com

Let's Twist again

Children's author Michael Rosen puts a contemporary spin on Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*...



A contemporary new musical, based on a novel by children's author Michael Rosen, itself mixed up with a Charles Dickens classic, could contain more twists than fusilli pasta. Musicians Yaya Bey and Conrad Murray tell What's On how they ended up intertwined with Unexpected Twist, and why young audiences will enjoy the ride, too...

Published in 2018, Unexpected Twist is an intriguing retelling of Oliver Twist by former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen, one of the best-known and most-loved figures in the world of children's literature, with nearly 150 books to his name.

The novel twists two stories into one - Rosen's original and the Dickens classic that inspired it - and focuses on the (mis)adventures of new girl Shona as she struggles to settle in at school.

That struggle is one which she has in common with Oliver Twist, the boy she's reading about in her English lessons...

Rosen's novel not only draws parallels between the two worlds but weaves text from the Dickens classic into a contemporary setting. And the musical stage adaptation very much follows suit. The show is produced by The Children's Theatre Partnership, whose previous work includes theatrical renderings of Animal Farm and The Jungle Book.

Adapted for the stage by BAFTA-winning playwright Roy Williams, Unexpected Twist features original music put together by rising R&B star Yaya Bey and Conrad Murray of BAC Beatbox Academy.

Yaya says working on the show was a pleasure, and that despite hailing from across the Atlantic and not being familiar with the Dickens original, the story really resonated with her.

"As a Black American who has only been to London once - and that was to work on the play and do a few of my own shows - I must admit that I don't know a lot of British things, more the American versions of British stories. I wasn't sure how I would relate to the story coming from the States, but there is such an emphasis on important issues that transcend culture barriers.

"I was really interested in it because I wanted to try something new. I also liked the fact it addresses the subject of poverty, which is something that's universal and familiar to me because I am someone who grew up in poverty and can absolutely speak to that."

Conrad, who previously worked on the stage version of young-adult book Crompton Knights, says he loved being part of a collaborative team on the project. He draws parallels between Dickens' tale and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

"Working on this show is like assembling The

Avengers! The creative team is top-notch and the cast are incredible. I love that it takes Oliver Twist as a story about poverty, which seems to tell a story about our current times. It talks a lot about the struggles people are currently going through."

Conrad points out how morality is called into question as people hustle and sell drugs in order to put food on the table. He wonders about the effect it has on youngsters.

"Maybe you see your parents doing what they have to do to make money, and that's actually quite a heroic act, but at the same time you're taught that maybe some of what they do is bad. That's quite a lot to take on board. I think young people will recognise the struggles in the play, as will adults. They'll watch and think 'We haven't moved far from what Dickens was writing about centuries ago.'"

Yaya is on the same page and believes the show's musical elements give it a distinct angle, even though the story is a universal one.

"I think it really speaks to black audiences. It's got a bunch of hip-hop and R&B sounds, mine and Conrad's involvement, the subject matter, and the cast. But it's also a play that speaks about poverty, and that is something which everyone should be concerned about. Everyone should watch it."

Both artists are convinced that adapting the book into a musical rather than a play will make it more palatable and enjoyable for a younger audience.

"Music always helps to put a story across," says Yaya. "Music is inviting and makes things more approachable for people, especially in a play like this, which is aimed at youth. Including music in the show makes it more relatable and hooks that young audience in."

Conrad says that the type of music he makes speaks to that same crowd and works in tandem with Roy Williams' adaptation, which he describe as "really now".

"Young people will recognise the characters and the slang, and while a lot of older plays have a middle-class worldview, this is very representative, with black, white and Asian characters on stage that kids will relate to."

He's also excited to bring cutting-edge genres of music to the show, which he believes will add an extra dimension to the experience.

"Being able to bring beatbox, hip-hop and

grime to the show is sick, as it helps modernise the story and create a new language and theatrical form on the stage.

"You'd call it beatbox, but we're recreating genres, so it's drill, R&B, hip-hop, pop and soul. That's the mash-up, and it's quite modern. Sometimes we have a nostalgic flair, but it's mainly those newer sounds."

'New' and 'now' are always key issues for the musician, who believes that not enough contemporary theatre is being made for younger audiences. He feels that the writing and subject matter is often too soft, as producers don't really know what young people want.

"It's about finding those creative voices that young people can relate to or who understand what they might be going through. That's the big challenge. Sometimes when stories are written for young people, they create worlds that don't currently exist or have never existed, like fairytales. They may be entertaining, but they're not rooted in now."

Despite being based on a text that's the best part of 200 years old, Conrad believes Unexpected Twist is a step in the right direction.

"I feel like we can push young audiences, which is what the play does. They are exposed to so much stuff now through TikTok, Instagram and blah blah blah, so you can take them a bit further. It can still be beautiful, and it can still be escapism, but we shouldn't patronise young audiences.

"This kind of theatre is in many ways the hardest to make because they're a tough audience and they see through things. That's why Roy's script is so good, because his street language feels real and always up-to-date."

Yaya also believes the content of the play will get an important message across to young people.

"It's a good start that there is a play about poverty for them to see. Oliver Twist has always existed, but now there's Unexpected Twist as a new, contemporary way to examine the subject."

.....

Unexpected Twist shows at the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, from Tuesday 16 to Saturday 20 May

DOGGY SUNDAYS!

The Littlest Bowl – £5

Shropshire Chicken,
Greens & Gravy

The Lassie Bowl – £8

Slow Braised Shropshire
Beef, Greens, Yorkie Pud
& Gravy

The Digby Bowl – £10

Slow Braised Shropshire
Beef, Shropshire Chicken,
Greens, Yorkie Pud &
Gravy

Price includes a donation to Hilbrae Rescue Kennels



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Tree**

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Shrewsbury
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Food & drink reviews from across the region...



REVIEW: The Peach Tree Shrewsbury favourite thriving as executive head chef returns

It's been a long time since I've eaten Chris Burt's food. Too long, in fact.

After a six-year break heading up kitchens elsewhere, the Momo-No-Ki cookbook author has returned 'home' to The Peach Tree as its reappointed executive head chef.

The Peach Tree, alongside sister venues Spirit and Havana, has recently welcomed new owners, The Shire Collection. Ready to stamp its mark on the town, the group is also new owners of The Boujee Lounge, located opposite Shrewsbury Train Station, and The Buttercross in Market Drayton...

On our arrival at the Abbey Foregate venue, my partner and I were met with Chris' beaming smile. He told us that walking into The Peach Tree on his first day brought back many happy and joyful memories. It's great to see him back where he belongs.

The Peach Tree menu is concise. I like that. It's always better to offer a handful of great dishes than a multitude of average ones.

We started with Chris' infamous Piggy Bits. Oh how I've missed

those little delights. Some bits crispy, some bits fatty, every morsel is generously coated in a sweet Korean glaze. Served with crunchy cucumber, spring onion and sesame, a bowl of these is enough to turn a vegetarian. Well, the ones sitting on the fence anyway.

Arriving at the table next was one of the most impressive-looking 'cocktails' I've ever seen - the presentation here is spot on, and then some. Featuring a generous amount of rich oak smoked salmon, king prawns and crayfish atop a beautifully creamy Bloody Mary mayo, this is the dish to go for if you're a fan of fruits of the sea. You've got the classic Baby Gem there, for crunch, and the addition of black and red caviar for bursts of salt. My favourite of the two starters.

Across the other side of the table were the tagine spiced crispy chicken wings served with a flavour-packed sabzi (think parsley, coriander, cumin), diced tomato for freshness and a smoky harissa dressing. The chicken itself was slightly over - it was lacking that juiciness you want from a wing. A minute or so

less and it would have been perfect. The coating, however, was crispy, as promised, and nicely seasoned.

The best dish of the evening was the Scottish salmon with firecracker noodles. Full of comforting umami flavours, the fish was buttery soft - it quite literally melted away in the mouth - and the fatty, miso-lathered skin was so incredibly tasty that I'd return for that alone. I can't actually remember eating a more enjoyable salmon fillet anywhere, in fact. I really love noodles. Put a noodle dish in front of me and I'm happy. Even the average ones. Fortunately, here, you're getting an above-average one.

The Shropshire sirloin was nice too; of a good quality and cooked medium rare as requested (I'd usually order my steak rare, but we were sharing, so I went with my partner's preference). It was served with the usual accompaniments: grilled tomato, mushroom, chunky chips and a moreish blue cheese sauce.

To finish, we ordered an assiette of desserts. Fantastic

presentation here again. It comprised: pistachio & strawberry macaroons; mini lemon tarts; a rich but ever-so-tasty chocolate toffee ganache; mini strawberry & white chocolate meringues topped with strawberry pieces and a sharp apple sauce; and, my favourite element, 'the mess' - sweet Chantilly cream topped with fresh raspberries and a raspberry sauce. If you've got a sweet tooth, book a table at The Peach Tree immediately to try it!

Old regulars will be pleased to know that the infamous caesar salad has made its way back on to the menu, as have the classics like fish & chips and Sunday roasts. Momo-No-Ki fans can rejoice too, as Chris will be running Momos nights in The Peach Tree every first Saturday of the month. Think ramen, sushi, curries, and of course, Piggy Bits!

Dog owners, there's something new for you too, as The Peach Tree has launched Doggy Sundays. Why not treat your canine companion to a bowl of slow-braised Shropshire beef? Or chicken. Or even both! Greens, gravy and a Yorkie pud also feature. And even better, every bowl purchased will see a donation to Hilbrae Rescue Kennels.

The Peach Tree is very much a part of Shrewsbury's furniture, and it's fantastic to see this much-loved restaurant back and thriving. Oh, and keep a close eye on its social channels, as The Shire Collection team has a few top-secret surprises to reveal in the coming weeks...

Lauren Foster

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
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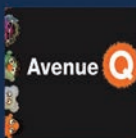
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28 April, 8pm
**Brewhouse
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Tickets: £14



21 April, 8pm
**Rich Hall:
Shot From
Cannons**
Tickets: £17



5 May, 7.30pm
**The Guitar
Experience**
Tickets: £18

Classical music from across the region...



Iceland Symphony Orchestra

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Friday 21 April

Returning to Symphony Hall by popular demand following their 2020 debut at the venue, the Iceland Symphony Orchestra (ISO) here get their teeth into Tchaikovsky's Fifth. The piece has become one of the composer's most popular works, despite the fact that the man himself was initially less than enamoured with his own creation. The programme also sees the orchestra

being joined by Sir Stephen Hough - for Beethoven's piano concerto no3 - and performing a new work, Metacosmos, by ISO composer-in-residence Anna Thorvaldsdottir, whose striking world of sound is often inspired by nature. The orchestra is led by new Chief Conductor Eva Ollikainen (pictured).

Roderick Williams & Susie Allan

St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, Fri 14 April

Internationally acclaimed baritone Roderick Williams and pianist Susie Allan once again harness their talents, this time to present a programme that features Schumann's great song-cycle, Dichterliebe. Roderick and Susie are a long-established musical partnership, and this Shropshire Music Trust concert is surely an unmissable event for anybody who's previously had the pleasure of seeing the pair performing together.



Ex Cathedra: Bach's St Matthew Passion

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Fri 7 April

A favourite at Easter, Bach's dramatic telling of the Passion of Christ continues to be one of classical music's most profound experiences. Sung in German with English surtitles, St Matthew Passion is here performed by Ex Cathedra's choir & baroque orchestra and Academy of Vocal Music, coming together under the direction of conductor Jeffrey Skidmore.

Andre Rieu

Resorts World Arena, Birmingham, Sat 15 April

Often referred to as the King of Waltz, Andre Rieu is a superstar violinist whose YouTube videos have been viewed in excess of one billion times. His Facebook account, meanwhile, is followed by nine million fans, while sales of his albums have now topped the 40 million mark. Andre is also the creator of the waltz-playing Johann Strauss Orchestra, which he conducts using his violin bow, mimicking the famous characteristics of Strauss himself. His concerts are well known for inspiring audience members to leave their seats and dance in the aisles, an activity which counts as something of a phenomenon at a classical music gig!



Simon and Saoko Blendis in Concert

Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Ludlow, South Shropshire, Wed 19 April

When husband-and-wife team Simon & Saoko Blendis began exploring the library of late violinist Max Jaffa during lockdown, they uncovered a wealth of largely forgotten salon pieces, from which they then produced their CD, Love Is Like A Violin.

In the months since its Summer 2022 release, the record has been streamed in excess of one million times. Simon & Saoko now bring its mix of gorgeous melodies, soulful ballads and electrifying gypsy dances to Ludlow as part of the Assembly Rooms' Wednesday Concert series.

THE PRICE OF PERFECTION

A new play by a local writer explores what we're prepared to trade in return for physical beauty...



Hayley Davis' new comedy-drama, 5 Years, addresses some of society's serious issues - as the Birmingham-based writer & performer explains to What's On...

A new comedy-drama by a Birmingham-based writer asks what price we would pay for the perfect body.

Telling the story of Yasmin, a woman in her 30s, who is prepared to trade half a decade of her life in return for physical beauty, 5 Years premieres in Wolverhampton this month, ahead of playing in Birmingham in June.

The show is the brainchild of writer & performer Hayley Davis, who was inspired to create 5 Years after being shocked by national research which revealed what people would sacrifice for the ideal body.

"I heard about a bit of research that was done by the Centre for Appearance Research in Bristol," says Hayley. "They had gone up and down the UK, going into universities and asking predominantly women of all ages a question: 'If somebody offered you the perfect body, what would you be willing to trade in return?'"

"I was really surprised at the responses. These were women in university who were willing to give up a first-class degree or salary. Some women said they were willing to give up 10 years of their lives, and a significant proportion said five years of their lives.

"I spoke to other people about the study and asked if they would trade five years for the perfect body, imagining everybody would say 'absolutely not'. But the majority of people didn't give a flat-out no; instead they were prepared to consider it, even to negotiate."

Hayley was initially stunned to find that people would consider something so dramatic for the sake of appearance, but then she asked herself the same question.

"It was just crazy to me. I thought 'five years is a bit drastic, but what would I trade if I could have the perfect body?' And then there's the question of what does that even mean? The idea of the perfect body is so fluid, it changes all the time.

"At the moment we can't trade five years, but actually some people are trading their lives in that search for perfection. They are having surgery, going and doing really dangerous things, taking skin-lightening creams that can cause cancer, having Brazilian butt-lifts which mean you can die on the table, or 'Turkey teeth', where people are living in

agony because they've shaved down perfectly healthy teeth. It's just torturous."

And so Hayley began writing 5 Years.

"I thought it would be interesting to have a woman who says 'Yes, I will do this' and then explore how people get to that point. The show isn't saying 'You should do this' or 'This will happen', it's posing a question and inviting people to come and sit with us and think about it.

"The character of Yasmin is in her 30s and disillusioned with her life. Nothing's terrible, but nothing's great, so she decides that maybe the thing she needs is to look a certain way.

"We're told that if we attain a certain look or have a certain beauty, then everything else will slot into place. So Yasmin decides she will have that look. She is picked to be the first woman to go ahead with it, and we see what happens from there."

The 70-minute production harnesses cutting-edge technology to visually explore themes around body image.

"I'm working with a really brilliant producer & director, Rebecca Gadsby, whose company, Inside Theatre, provides tech solutions to theatres. We've partnered with Sheffield Hallam University and Bristol-based Holotronica - who specialise in really interesting holographic technology - for the show.

"There are these huge stadium events where they are trying to integrate digital technology - like ABBA Voyage, for example - and we wanted to look at whether we could do that for smaller-scale shows. There has been a lot of work and research into making that happen, and the results are really spectacular."

Hayley, who lives in Great Barr, undertook an MA in creative writing at University of Birmingham while she was developing 5 Years.

"I took time to build my skills and write in different mediums, which really pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me to look at the structure of stories in a different way. That was immensely helpful."

And it was important that her story was applicable to people of all ages and

backgrounds.

"We thought a lot about making the show relevant to men as well as women - more and more, we're seeing these issues bleed out into men's lives in a dangerous way. This pressure to conform to a particular way of looking is coming from everywhere, and men are feeling that as well.

"We did some research and development for the show and invited mixed audiences, men and women of all different ages, to give feedback. A lot of men anonymously wrote back that they saw the issues reflected back to them as well, because they also have those sorts of struggles. I don't think anyone escapes it."

The play is a two-hander in which Hayley performs with actress Lauren Poveda. The team have received Arts Council funding for the tour, which currently runs until the end of June. Alongside the tour, the producers are also holding a series of workshops. These include a body positive event developed with support from mental-health charity Flourish, a workshop aimed at health professionals, and an event encouraging young women to explore careers in technology.

Hayley is keen to point out that although 5 Years is exploring some serious issues, it does so with plenty of humour.

"Essentially audiences want to be entertained, so even though it's a difficult subject, it's a warm and funny show. I'd encourage people to see it as something that is thought-provoking, entertaining and uplifting.

"It has some pretty cool tech, which is always a great thing to see. We're doing things that audiences don't necessarily see on a smaller scale, which is exciting. And I think the show might also be for people who don't think theatre is for them, because I'm basically inviting people to come for an hour and have a chat, have a little think and be entertained."

.....

5 Years shows at Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, on Friday 14 April, and Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, on Wednesday 21 & Thursday 22 June

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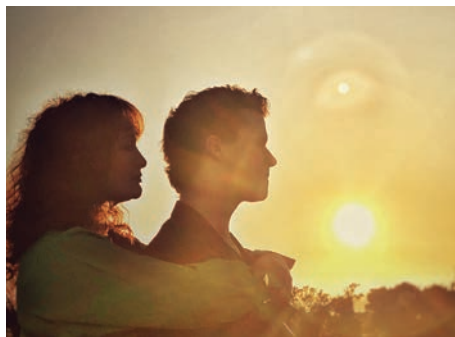
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Live music from across the region...

Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sun 2 April

Having racked up more than 20 years of musicmaking - not only together but with the likes of Seth Lakeman, Cara Dillon, Levellers, Kate Rusby and Show Of Hands - husband & wife singer-songwriters Kathryn Roberts and Sean Lakeman have firmly established themselves as pillars of the modern British folk scene. So much so, in fact, that the couple have twice won the Best Duo gong at the BBC Radio Two Folk Awards. Widely admired for the imaginative nature of their output, their songs have featured subjects as diverse and original as Norwegian legends, wicked mermaids and lonely whales.



Urban Folk Quartet

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 22 April

The Urban Folk Quartet are like no other folk band. With Birmingham's vibrant and diverse music scene having a significant influence on their work, they dabble in all kinds of sounds, from funk grooves and Middle-Eastern melodies, to afrobeat and north Indian rhythms. They tug their forelock in the direction of more-traditional folk, too, describing their music as 'fiddle-led' and drawing heavily on 'celtic dance forms and traditional song'.



Terrorvision

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent, Sat 29 April

Spawned back in the 1980s from the remnants of glam rockers Spoilt Brats, Terrorvision busted their proverbial guts on the touring circuit, played support slots for long-time heroes The Ramones and Motorhead, and finally found their place in

the sun in the early 1990s with breakthrough album *How To Make Friends And Influence People*.

If you love sledgehammer singalong hits and shameless live-rock thrills, this smash-hit band from Bradford deliver in spades. Expect classic anthems like *Oblivion*, *Bad Actress*, and their 1999 number-two hit, *Tequila*.

Sari Schorr

The Robin, Bilston, Thurs 6 April

After years spent plying her trade on the road, Blues powerhouse Sari Schorr finally found the limelight back in 2016 with critically acclaimed album *A Force Of Nature*. Since then, there's simply been no stopping the New York-born singer-songwriter. She stops off in Bilston as part of her *Freedom* tour.

Sunbirds

The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury, Fri 14 April

Beautiful South founder member Dave Hemingway is joined in new band Sunbirds by drummer Marc Parnell, singer/violinist Laura Wilcockson and erstwhile Beautiful South colleague, guitarist & songwriter Phil Barton, "Phil brought some songs for me, and I thought, 'Yeah, these are worth pursuing,'" Dave told *Retro Pop*, in talking about Sunbirds' first album, *Cool To Be Kind*. "In a way, it sort of ignited my spark again. It was very much us doing it ourselves and paying for it - not being attached to a record company. You don't know how these things are going to go; you don't know if there's gonna be a decent album or not till you've finished and it's out there. But I'm very pleased with it."

Jasmine Myra

Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 20 April

Jasmine Myra is a saxophonist, composer, band leader and leading light of Leeds' cross-genre music scene. She produces original instrumental music that boasts a euphoric, uplifting, emotive sound, calling to mind the output of artists as diverse as Bonobo, Olafur Arnalds and Kenny Wheeler. Her visit to Wolverhampton comes in support of debut album *Horizons*, a critically acclaimed work that blends jazz and electronica with the merest hint of English folk music.



Summer Family Fun



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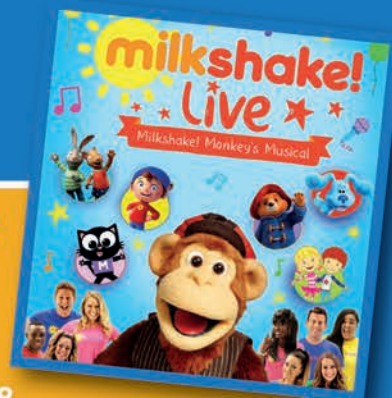
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Comedy previews from across the region

Bob Odenkirk

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 17 April

'Wild characters' and 'humorous tangents' abound when Emmy-winning writer and Golden Globe-nominated actor, comedian & director Bob Odenkirk takes to the stage. Presenting a



show in which he recounts the twists and turns of his comedy career, Bob reveals all (well, plenty, at any rate) about his time on legendary television programmes The Larry Sanders Show and Saturday Night Live. He also explains how he became 'everyone's favourite lawyer' in hit TV series Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul, and then reinvented himself as an 'action-film ass-kicker' to star in the critically acclaimed movie, Nobody.

Bob is stopping off in Birmingham to mark the paperback publication of his Sunday Times bestselling book, Comedy, Comedy, Comedy, Drama.

Chris McCausland

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Fri 28 April

"A long time ago, when I'd only just started out as a comedian," recalls scouse funnyman Chris McCausland, "I walked out on stage and was telling a joke to break the ice about being blind, when somebody in the audience shouted out pantomime style, 'We're behind you!' It was very funny!"

Chris has the eye condition retinitis pigmentosa. "It's been referred to in different ways across the years," he says, "from the rather dull and generic-sounding macular degeneration to the cool and groovy inverse cone-rod dystrophy!"

A touring comedian since the mid-noughties, Chris has also appeared on a host of television panel games and in TV series including EastEnders and Moving On. He's perhaps best known, though, for playing Rudi in the CBeebies programme, Me Too!. He visits the Midlands this month with his latest touring show, Speaky Blinder.



Matt Rife

Birmingham Town Hall, Wed 26 April

Matt Rife is a comedian who certainly knows how to make the most of social media: his escapades on TikTok have seen him amass more than five million followers and chalk up in excess of 260 million views. None of which would be possible if he wasn't a very talented

guy. The fast-rising funnyman from Columbus, Ohio - who was formerly in a relationship with British actress Kate Beckinsale - is stopping off in Birmingham as part of a whistle-stop visit to the UK.



Kane Brown

The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 9 April; Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton, Sat 13 May; The Glee Club, Birmingham, Sun 28 May; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Fri 23 June

Parenthood, family life, relationships and British culture are among the subjects to which Kane Brown regularly returns during his live shows.

The one-time direct-sales executive kickstarted his current career back in 2006 when he enrolled in a two-week course in standup-comedy, since which time he's honed his rib-tickling talents to excellent effect.

Kane visits the Midlands this month with his acclaimed show, Don't Listen To Me, I Chat Sh*t.



Emmanuel Sonubi

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Thurs 27 April; Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge, Thurs 28 September

Emmanuel Sonubi is clambering up comedy's greasy pole at spectacular speed and looks set to achieve big things in the coming years.

An Edinburgh Comedy Award 2022 nominee in the category of best newcomer, Emmanuel scored a major hit in the Scottish capital with his now-touring show, Emancipated. Topics he covers in the show include his time spent as a doorman at some of London's scariest clubs, his career in musical theatre, and his life as a parent to two young children.

EVIL PLANKTON!

Drag star Divina De Campo talks about playing the baddie in The SpongeBob Musical, the hit family show coming to the Midlands...



Following its huge success in the US, The SpongeBob Musical arrives in the Midlands this month, with Divina De Campo and Gareth Gates in starring roles. What's On recently caught up with RuPaul's Drag Race UK star Divina to find out about the challenges of playing the world's nastiest piece of plankton...

Drag queen and actor Divina De Campo is heading underwater this month to play the baddie Plankton in the touring production of The SpongeBob Musical.

Premiered in Chicago in 2016 and now on its first UK tour, the family show features songs from a range of artists, including Cyndi Lauper, David Bowie and Brian Eno, The Flaming Lips and Panic! At The Disco.

The show was a smash-hit in the US, gaining 12 Tony Award nominations. Based on children's television series SpongeBob SquarePants, it sees the characters' home of Bikini Bottom at risk from a volcano. And while SpongeBob aims to save the day, his evil nemesis, Plankton, has other plans.

Starring alongside Gareth Gates (who plays Squidward) and Lewis Cornay (SpongeBob - pictured), Divina is looking forward to taking on the part of the nastiest piece of plankton around.

"I've played the baddie in a few different shows before, and you're allowed to be all the things that you're not usually allowed to be. It gives you much more licence to be mean and horrible and spiteful. But Plankton is actually quite a complicated character. He's a piece of plankton, so actually very, very small. People ignore him because he's so small, and I think the only way he can get people to take him seriously is through these evil machinations. So he's a bit more complicated than just evil.

"I'm really looking forward to getting my teeth properly into who Plankton is, and pulling out the nuances within the character. It's easy to go 'Right, I'm evil, this is how an evil person would deliver a line and on we go,' but what I find really interesting is the digging into the character. It's always there in the script - why is this character the way they are? Then it's about helping to lift and shape those nuances so that the audience can understand - you can shine a light on how people became who they are by the way that you deliver stuff."

After a series of television appearances and live shows, Divina came to the fore as one of 10 competitors in RuPaul's Drag Race UK four



years ago. Coming 'first runner-up' has paved the way for a career on stage: The popular drag queen has also played reporter Miss Sunshine in the UK tour of Chicago.

"I don't think that I would have been in SpongeBob or Chicago without Drag Race. I was doing plenty of little bits and pieces of piecemeal TV before Drag Race, but what Drag Race has allowed me to do is go through the doors that were shut. I didn't go to the well-known arts schools and don't have a vocational qualification, and without doing extra vocational training, I don't think those companies would even have let me into the room to be seen."

Although gaining celebrity status has opened several doors, Divina points out that it takes more than being a 'name' to secure a role.

"People in our industry complain about 'celebrity', but the industry has always worked in that way. There's always been celebrities in shows, but with musical theatre you can't just put a celebrity into a show. If they can't do the job, then there's no point, because the show suffers. You still have to have people who are talented and capable; it's just that they've also played the game.

"I knew what I wanted; I wanted to be doing more theatre and musicals, and this has given me the vehicle to do that. I'm very grateful."

Divina believes Drag Race has also helped

spark a new appreciation of the art of drag performance.

"There was a moment in the '90s, in that Britpop laddish era, where people kind of fell out of love with drag. It was seen as something a bit rubbish or a bit naff, when before it had always been a staple of Saturday-night telly and the theatre industry, - the variety sector particularly. But Drag Race has reminded audiences that people who do drag generally have a lot of skill. Their entire job is to entertain, to help you have a good time, and I think reminding people of that has been really good."

Performing as a drag queen can often be a solo enterprise. For Divina, being part of a company bringing a musical to venues across the UK is a different type of experience.

"What I really enjoy about this kind of show is being part of the team, being part of the ensemble, and everyone has their part to play. In some ways it takes a bit of pressure off you because it's not just you delivering the full two hours of entertainment.

"SpongeBob was a big thing in our house. I'm one of seven, and we would all watch SpongeBob. With the stage show, I'm looking forward to the magic of it, those moments when things happen which can't happen in the ordinary world because it's theatre, and people are really transported to somewhere else. I'm not a particularly mean or nasty person, but I'm really excited to have the licence to take on that mean and nasty character. One of the things I love about acting in general is that you're able to take on those different characters and bring them before audiences.

"And I'm really excited to be part of a show which is so full of hope, joy and fun - a tonic for the times we're living in."

The SpongeBob Musical shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 11 to Saturday 15 April & Wolverhampton Grand Theatre (minus Gareth Gates), from Tuesday 27 June - Saturday 1 July



Titanic The Musical Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 18 - Sat 22 April; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 24 - Sat 29 April

Director Thom Southerland would be the first to admit that a musical about RMS Titanic could have gone horribly wrong. Faced with one of history's most infamous tragedies - in which more than 1,500 people died after the luxury liner hit an iceberg and sank on its maiden voyage - the question was: How do you tell the story in a way which is respectful to the memory of those who perished? For Thom, the answer was about celebrating the lives of the people on board the ship - paying tribute to their hopes and dreams - rather than

focusing on the catastrophe. "I think the Titanic story will always be with us," says Thom. "There's a fascination with it, the majesty of the legend of Titanic. "The success of the musical is that it takes that story and legend of history and makes it a very human story. It makes it a story that we can all associate with, as we all set sail on the journey with the passengers who were brave enough to sail on that maiden voyage more than 100 years ago."

Heathers The Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 11 - Sat 15 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 16 - Sat 20 May; Malvern Theatres, Tues 25 - Sat 29 July

Although far from being an unqualified success with the critics, Heathers The Musical did great business in the West End, and is equally likely to pack them in during its first-ever UK tour. Based on the cult 1989 movie starring Winona Ryder and Christian Slater, the show follows the character of Veronica Sawyer, a high school student who's tired of being part of a feared and popular clique with three girls named Heather. Eager to opt out, she finds herself drawn to new student Jason 'JD' Dean, a rebellious young man with murder in mind...



Pride & Prejudice* (*sort of)

The Rep, Birmingham, Mon 17 - Sat 22 April Having bagged the 2022 Olivier Award for best new comedy, Pride And Prejudice*(*sort of) is all the rage at the moment - and quite right too. A unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, the show has proved a winner with critics and audiences alike. Indeed, celebrity fan Stephen Fry has described it as an evening of 'hilarity, romance, madness and utter theatrical joy'. Alongside the raucously irreverent but admirably affectionate retelling of Austen's rollercoaster romance, the show also boasts a host of pop classics, including Young Hearts Run Free, Will You Love Me Tomorrow and You're So Vain. Seriously, what's not to like?

Annie

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 3 - Sat 15 April; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 8 - Sat 13 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 10 - Sat 14 October

Craig Revel Horwood is the latest high-profile performer to take on the coveted role of Miss Hannigan in Annie. Telling the heart-warming rags-to-riches story of a little girl who finds herself transported from a New York orphanage to the luxurious world of a millionaire, the oft-touring Broadway musical features plenty of memorable songs, including It's A Hard Knock Life, I Don't Need Anything But You, Easy Street, and of course the legendary Tomorrow. Jodie Prenger takes over from Revel Horwood for the Regent Theatre run of the show.



THE SPONGEBOB MUSICAL
UK PREMIERE TOUR

Tue 11 - Sat 15 Apr

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OUR GIRLS, OUR GAME

Fri 14 & Sat 15 Apr

CAP

Hit The Ode

TITANIC THE MUSICAL

10TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

Tue 18 - Sat 22 Apr

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TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS → KNOCK ON WOOD
YOU KEEP ME HANGIN' ON → I CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION → RIVER DEEP MOUNTAIN HIGH
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NIGEL PIVARO

Mon 24 - Sat 29 Apr

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WNO Welsh National Opera

The Magic Flute
Mozart

Wed 3 - Fri 5 May

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WNO Welsh National Opera

Blaze of Glory!

Sat 6 May

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BIRMINGHAM ROYAL BALLET

Apollo

Thu 8 - Sat 10 Jun

CAP

Sadler's Wells

breakin' convention 2023
UK TOUR 2023

Tue 13 & Wed 14 Jun

CAP



The Commitments

Birmingham Hippodrome,
Mon 24 - Sat 29 April

Roddy Doyle's smash-hit musical adaptation of his own bestselling novel follows on from the Bafta-bagging movie version that scored a huge international hit way back in the early 1990s.

As with book and film, the stage show finds working-class music fan Jimmy Rabbitte inspiring an unlikely bunch of amateur musicians and friends to become the finest soul band Dublin has ever produced. Along the way, the band treats the audience to more than 20 gold-star soul classics, including: Night Train; Try A Little Tenderness; River Deep, Mountain High; In The Midnight Hour; Papa Was A Rolling Stone; Mustang Sally; and I Heard It Through The Grapevine. One-time Coronation Street favourite Nigel Pivaro stars as 'Da'.

The Beekeeper Of Aleppo

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 4 - Sat 8 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 23 - Sat 27 May; The Rep, Birmingham, Tues 13 - Sat 17 June

Nesrin Alrefaai's stage adaptation of Christy Leftieri's bestselling novel is stopping off in the Midlands as part of its first-ever tour. Reflecting on the connections that exist between friends, families and strangers, the story follows the characters of beekeeper Nuri and artist Afra, a married couple enjoying a simple life in the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo. But when war breaks out, the pair must flee for their lives. They embark on a journey that sees them not only face the pain of their own unbearable loss but also the challenge of finding each other again. The production is helmed by Olivier Award-winning director Miranda Cromwell.



The Killing Of Sister George

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme,
Fri 21 April - Sat 13 May

Critically acclaimed theatre company Told By An Idiot here make a welcome return to the

region to present a brand-new production of Frank Marcus' nowadays rarely performed 1964 black comedy. Famously adapted into a film in 1968 starring Beryl Reid in the title role, *The Killing Of Sister George* focuses on actress June Buckridge, a foul-mouthed, cigar-chomping, gin-swiggling woman whose life spirals out of control when she discovers that the district-nurse character she plays in a BBC Radio soap opera is to be killed off... It's widely believed that Frank Marcus' inspiration for the play was the killing of Grace Archer in the BBC's Midlands-set radio soap, *The Archers*. The episode in which Grace died, broadcast on 22 September 1955 - allegedly to distract from the same-evening launch of ITV - attracted a staggering 20 million listeners.

Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Wed 26 April

Robert Louis Stevenson's classic gothic novella tells the tale of a brilliant but obsessive scientist whose sadistic alter-ego wreaks havoc across Victorian London. This dark, twisted tale about love, redemption and the seductive power of evil is here presented by the Dickens Theatre Company, an ensemble who pride themselves on the accessible nature of their productions.

Trade

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,
Fri 7 - Sun 9 April

Ella Dorman-Gajic's critically acclaimed play steps inside the European sex-trafficking

industry to ask uncomfortable questions about morality and power. A visceral three-hander, it homes in on the character of Jana, a young woman who is about to travel from Serbia to London with her new boyfriend, Stefan. But when she wakes up in a basement in Sarajevo, she finds herself unexpectedly propelled into a world where moral certainty evaporates and the line between victim and perpetrator becomes increasingly blurred... Artistically integrated captions make this play accessible for both d/Deaf audiences and native Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian speakers.



Lord Of The Flies

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Tues 25 - Sat 29 April

Written by William Golding in 1954, *Lord Of The Flies* tells the story of a group of boys who find themselves stranded on an uninhabited island. In an effort to bring some order to their peculiar existence, they attempt to govern themselves. But things soon get seriously out of hand... This new version of Golding's classic is presented by the Belgrade in association with Leeds Playhouse and Rose Theatre.

WHAT WILL YOU SEE NEXT?

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MELODY THORNTON



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THE MUSICAL

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Drive Your Plow Over The Bones Of The Dead

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,
Wed 19 - Sat 22 April

In a small community on a remote Polish mountainside, a man from the local hunting club dies in mysterious circumstances... Janina Duszejko has her suspicions. An eccentric older local woman, devoted astrologer, environmentalist and enthusiastic translator of William Blake, Janina has been watching the animals with whom the community shares their isolated, rural home - and she's of the opinion they've been acting somewhat strangely... This stage adaptation of Nobel Prize-winning author Olga Tokarczuk's darkly comic murder-mystery novel is presented by internationally acclaimed touring company Complicité.

Unexpected Twist

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 11 - Sat 15 April; Malvern Theatres, Tues 9 - Sat 13 May; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 16 - Sat 20 May



One-time Children's Laureate Michael Rosen here brings a retelling of Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist to the Midlands. Described as 'an Oliver Twisted Tale', Unexpected Twist combines the 1838 classic with a terrific tale of Michael's very own. The central character in his story is Shona, the new girl in school, whose class is studying Oliver Twist. Much like the young hero of the Dickens classic, Shona is finding it hard to stay out of trouble. But when she's given a phone by a stranger, she begins to suspect there's something unusual about the new boys she's met... Unexpected Twist is presented by The Children's Theatre Partnership, whose previous shows have included adaptations of Animal Farm and The Jungle Book.

Cymbeline

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 22 April - Sat 27 May

Blending reality with fantasy, Shakespeare's rarely performed play tells the story of

Imogen, the daughter of King Cymbeline of Britain, who marries the lowly Posthumus against her father's wishes. Angered by the union, Cymbeline banishes Posthumus, who, relocating to Italy, places a bet on the chastity of his wife, who has remained in Britain. But when Posthumus is incorrectly informed that he has lost the wager, he is overcome with sexual jealousy and plots to have his spouse killed. Learning that her life is in danger, Imogen flees to Wales, disguised as a boy... RSC Artistic Director Emeritus Gregory Doran helms a production that promises a compelling concoction of surprise and suspense.

Too Much World At Once

The Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 6 - Sat 8 April



Award-winning Manchester theatre company Box Of Tricks here does what it does best - champions a playwright by presenting a new work reflecting 'the world in which we live today'.

Billie Collins' Too Much World At Once - described by the company as 'a lyrical, theatrical journey that spans continents and lives' - finds teenager Noble transforming

into a bird on the occasion of his 15th birthday.

Thousands of miles away, his sister, Cleo, is stationed on a remote island with the British Antarctic Survey. The birds have disappeared and Noble needs to reach Cleo. Lying low until it's time to take flight, he finds solace in misfit Ellis, while his mother, Fiona, desperately tries to stop their home from falling apart...

Teachers Leavers '22

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 April; Old Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 11 & Fri 12 May; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 22 - Wed 24 May; Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 25 May

John Godber's highly acclaimed comedy, Teachers - first performed way back in the mid-1980s - dealt with the sense of disillusionment evident in students at that time - and also in many of those who educated them.

This revised, updated version, set in a struggling academy the better part of 40 years later, boasts the same edgy humour as the original. It also makes it clear that although time has moved on, the country's education system remains a source of upset and frustration for many of those whose lives are inextricably linked to it.



New Vic and Told by an Idiot Co-Production

The Killing of Sister George

By Frank Marcus

NEW VIC
told by an Idiot



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Age guidance



NICK MOHAMMED:
THE VERY BEST AND VERY WORST OF MR. SWALLOW
THURSDAY 13 APRIL



THE JUNGLE BOOK
FRIDAY 14 APRIL



LUCY PORTER:
WAKE UP CALL
SATURDAY 15 APRIL



GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS
SUNDAY 16 APRIL



MARTIN O'NEILL:
AN EVENING WITH CONVERSATION WITH MATTHEW STADLEN
FRIDAY 28 APRIL



TEACHERS LEAVERS '22
THURSDAY 11 & FRIDAY 12 MAY

Theatre for younger audiences...



Fireman Sam Saves The Circus

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 13 April; Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 14 April; The Civic, Stourport, Mon 29 May; Brierley Hill Civic, Fri 2 June; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 30 July

Now an impressive 36 years into his firefighting career, Fireman Sam is still putting out blazes in Pontypandy and lighting up children's eyes with delight. In this long-touring adventure, perpetual troublemaker Norman Price decides to become the star of the circus. But with a tiger on the loose and faulty lights threatening everybody's safety, it's soon time for Fireman Sam to reach for his trusty hose and come to the rescue.

Mog The Forgetful Cat

The Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 13 - Sat 15 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 30 May - Sun 4 June

This hour-long stage production featuring the late Judith Kerr's much-loved creation is presented by Bristol-based theatre group The Wardrobe Ensemble.

Suitable for children aged three-plus, the show takes audiences on a journey through one year in the life of forgetful feline Mog, whose adventures see her catching a burglar, gatecrashing a cat show, going to the vet, and eating a considerable number of eggs. Although Kerr is perhaps best known for her 1968 children's story, *The Tiger Who Came To Tea*, her character of Mog is certainly no slouch when it comes to the serious business of exciting and delighting young readers; indeed, the original Mog story, published in 1970, has never been out of print.

Hey Duggee

Birmingham Town Hall, Mon 10 - Wed 12 April; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 3 - Sun 6 August

The stage adaptation of kids' television series *Hey Duggee* arrives in the Midlands positively laden with prestigious awards, including Baftas and Emmys.

The hugely popular CBeebies offering sees star-of-the-show Duggee - a big, friendly dog - leading the Squirrel Club, the young members of which enjoy spending their time engaging in all manner of activities and adventures. In the process they earn a variety of badges for their accomplishments... Since starting its tour, this new interactive show has scored a major hit with grown-ups and little ones alike.

The production comes complete with music,

puppets, stickers galore and 'barrels of laughs along the way'.

I Spy With My Little Eye

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Tues 4 April; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Wed 31 May

If you're familiar with other picture books by Steven Lee - think *Don't Dribble On The Dragon* and *How The Koala Learnt To Hug* - you will surely want to take your little ones to see this delightful stage version of *I Spy With My Little Eye*.

Presented by The People's Theatre Company, the story sees Molly and Bingo the Puppy-Dog inviting youngsters and their families to Molly's sixth birthday party.

The celebration comes complete with 'a terrific treasure hunt, all your favourite singalong songs and lots of fantastic games to play'.

Morgan & West: Unbelievable Science

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Thurs 13 April

Whether you're seven or 107, a lover of brain-busting illusion, a fan of good old-fashioned tomfoolery, or a student of 'captivating chemistry, phenomenal physics and bonkers biology', Morgan & West are confident they have the show for you...

Time-travelling Victorian magicians with a background in scientific study, the daredevil duo are here promising 'explosive thrills, chemical spills, and a risk assessment that gives their stage manager chills'...

The Jungle Book

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 1 & Sun 2 April; Stourbridge Town Hall, Tues 4 April; The Old Rep, Birmingham, Fri 14 April

Made universally popular by the classic Walt Disney movie, Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* tells the story of a young boy named Mowgli who's been raised in the jungle by a family of wolves. His friends, Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther, are determined to save him from the evil intentions of Shere Khan the tiger. But keeping Mowgli safe is no walk in the jungle, as his two furry pals soon find out...

Immersion Theatre make a welcome return with their fun musical adaptation of this long-time family favourite.

Shark In The Park

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham, Mon 3 April

Nick Sharratt has illustrated hundreds of books, a significant percentage of which have been his own. One of these is the hugely successful *Shark In The Park!*, a children's story about a young lad named Timothy who goes to his local park to try out his new telescope. While there, he thinks he spots a shark - and not just on one occasion either, but several times in several places!...

The popularity of the book prompted Nick to write and illustrate two follow-up offerings - *Shark In The Dark!* and *Shark In The Park On A Windy Day!*.

All three stories are featured in this much-loved stage show from the highly rated Nonsense Room theatre company. The production is being performed twice during the afternoon and is suitable for children aged three-plus.

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Light entertainment from around the region



Ru Paul's Drag Race

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 18 April

If you're a big fan of TV show RuPaul's Drag Race UK, then you'll definitely want to check out this live-on-stage extravaganza. As with previous editions of the touring show, the 2023 production will feature all participating queens from the most recent television series - which in this case means that you'll be in the company of the following outrageous drag stars: Baby, Black Peppa, Cheddar Gorgeous, Copper Top, Dakota Schiffer, Danny Beard, Jonbers Blonde, Just May, LeFil, Pixie Polite, Sminty Drop and Starlet.

Holly Stars: Nightmare Neighbour

Crewe Lyceum Theatre, Fri 28 April

Holly Stars makes a welcome return with a brand-new show. It's been 10 years since Holly's worst enemy, Posh Sue, moved in across the street. But not content with making Holly's life a misery at every turn, Sue has also branded her a 'nightmare neighbour'.



There are, however, two sides to every story, and this 90-minute stand-up special sees Holly taking the opportunity to tell hers... Currently one of the UK's hottest drag acts, Holly is the writer and star of murder-mystery comedy play, *Death Drop*, the sequel to which, *Back In The Habit*, last month stopped off at Birmingham theatre *The Alexandra*. Holly is joined for *Nightmare Neighbour* by 'drag king' Richard Energy.

Matricks Illusion

Lichfield Garrick, Fri 7 April

Fast-paced magic & illusion combined with dancing and special effects will be the order of the day when Matricks visits Lichfield Garrick Theatre this month. Featuring 'master illusionist' Alexander Jesson, the act appeared in the last series of *Britain's Got Talent* and has shared stage space with artists including Westlife, Adam Lambert, Ashley Banjo & KSI.



The Elvis Dead

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 28 & Sat 29 April

If you've ever wondered what cult classic horror movie *Evil Dead 2* would look like when reinterpreted through the songs of Elvis Presley (which, let's be honest, you probably haven't), then this is your chance to find out. Described by its publicity as 'a one-man horror comedy mash-up', *The Elvis Dead* left audiences at the 2017 Edinburgh Fringe 'all shook up' and laughing in the aisles. West Midlander Rob Kemp is the man behind the craziness, using his time on stage not only to impersonate the King of Rock & Roll but also to reenact gratuitous scenes from the aforementioned horror movie. Confused? You're likely to remain that way - but have great fun in the process - when this thoroughly unique theatrical offering stops off in Birmingham this month. Sequined jumpsuit and flesh-slicing chainsaw at the ready now...



Haters Roast: The Shady Tour

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sun 9 April

Advertised as 'the ultimate showdown of witty insults, spilled tea, insensitive comments, political incorrectness and hilarious shenanigans', *The Haters Roast* is coming to the UK for the very first time.

RuPaul's Drag Race UK Season One winner The Vivienne is the host for the evening, with other contributors including Trinity The Tuck, Miz Cracker, Jimbo and Baga Chips.



Queenz: The Show With Balls

Lichfield Garrick, Sun 30 April; Telford Theatre, Wed 11 October; Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 26 October; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Sat 18 November

Loved and adored by celebrities including Gary Barlow and Dawn French, *Queenz* is described as 'a trailblazing, life-affirming drag extravaganza that's currently taking the UK by storm'. The show sees death-dropping divas slaying the biggest hits of all time - and there won't be a lip-sync in sight! So get ready to sing along to reimagined classics from *The Spice Girls*, *Lady Gaga*, *Little Mix*, *Britney*, *Whitney* and everything in between...



SINGING IN THE VALLEYS

Welsh National Opera's *Blaze Of Glory!* makes its Midlands debut...



With the former mining communities of the Welsh Valleys at the heart of the story, Welsh National Opera's latest production, *Blaze Of Glory!*, is a tale of determination, solidarity and friendship. What's On recently caught up with the show's director, Caroline Clegg, to find out more...

Welsh National Opera (WNO) this spring premieres a new work created and set in South Wales. Telling the tale of a male voice choir's determination to succeed against the odds, *Blaze Of Glory!* pays tribute to the musical traditions and close-knit neighbourhoods of the Valleys.

Written by Emma Jenkins and directed by Caroline Clegg, the same team who created WNO's *Rhondda Rips It Up!*, this new production turns the spotlight firmly on the region's former mining communities.

"We wanted to look at the Welsh mining community and the tradition of the male voice choir," says Caroline, "and not just from the men's perspective but from the whole community's point of view.

"It's set post-war, in 1957, when male voice choirs played a major part in mining communities. Our story begins after a tragic mining disaster. Some of the choir members were lost and the choir has been disbanded; there's rumour of pits closing and morale is at an all-time low."

With the encouragement of pianist Miss Nerys Price, miner Dafydd Pugh is persuaded to take up his baton once again and convince the old guard committee to form a Glee choir. Auditions take place, a kidnapping escapade is planned, and the men set their sights on competing once again at the local and national Eisteddfods.

Blaze Of Glory! explores not only the role of the choirs in their towns and villages but also the changes taking place at the time.

"The hierarchy in the colliery, the patriarchy in the community and the established traditions of their beloved choirs were all important," says Caroline. "The choirs offered a source of pride and ownership of a rich cultural history, and any rule changes were considered tampering with the way things had always been done. So it is with great trepidation that the committee is approached.

"And then there are the fun and formidable women, subtly encouraging the way forward as only women knew how to at that time!"

Emma undertook extensive research for the

piece, and most characters are based on real people and real stories. Caroline spent time interviewing miners and visiting former mining communities. Her travels also took her to, amongst other venues, the Big Pit National Coal Museum in Blaenavon and The Rhondda Heritage Park.

"Blaze is a celebration of song and the highs and lows of community life. It's an inspiring look at the antics of an intrepid bunch of men who are willing to go the extra mile to win, despite the harsh life they faced.

"Mining communities experienced disasters and lived with life-and-death work every day, but they rarely talked about it. Blaze pays tribute to those communities with a gentle nostalgia and with tongue firmly in cheek!"

The creative team were also keen to involve today's male voice choirs, so at each performance the WNO chorus is joined by local choristers, with the City of Birmingham Male Voice Choir singing at Birmingham Hippodrome.

"Having the choirs involved was paramount. From day one we said the production had to involve members of the community as an integral part of the production because it's their story.

"The choirs welcome the audience in the foyer and sing with the WNO chorus, so the audiences will experience a great swell of sound. It's been three years since many choirs have been able to come together. Having so many join us is a real honour and an experience the WNO cast are really looking forward to. I hope the audiences will enjoy feeling they are a part of the show and share in the thrill of song."

The City of Birmingham Male Voice Choir brings together members of the Birmingham Icknield Male Voice Choir and Birmingham Canoldir Male Choir. With choristers ranging from university students to individuals in their 90s, the group is looking forward to being part of the show.

"Blaze Of Glory! is an ideal opportunity to sing with some of the best professionals in the land," says John Warr, chair of Birmingham Icknield Male Voice Choir. "We

hope that the additional publicity will enable us to increase our membership and spread the enjoyment of male voice singing. Our participation in this show can only enhance the tradition and hopefully show the public how much fun it can be.

"The prospect of singing in a major theatre with a leading musical company can only be an experience that few choristers will be able to have."

Although the show is firmly set in Wales, Caroline says the love of community singing and its universal themes means *Blaze Of Glory!* will resonate for audiences elsewhere.

"In the last 10 years there has been a huge growth of community choirs, both big and small, connecting people and bringing a sense of wellbeing. It was inspiring to see that during the pandemic so many musical directors kept choirs together by creating ingenious ways online to meet, and then later meeting in the rain in the middle of fields and car parks.

"Singing together brings out the indomitable spirit in all of us, and post-lockdown it will go from strength to strength. We need to feel connected to each other more than ever as technology takes over.

"I would urge non-opera-goers and opera-goers alike to give *Blaze* a go. *Blaze Of Glory!* is a little bit of a hybrid, and if you have never been to an opera, then this is for you! The music is a delightful mix, with influences from the big band swing era, lindy hopping, gospel, and glorious traditional Welsh hymns like Canon Lân and Llanfair. You will definitely go home with a song in your heart.

"The heart and soul of this piece is community, solidarity and friendship. It's a real feelgood show, and that is definitely something to celebrate post-lockdown, whatever your background."

.....
WNO's *Blaze Of Glory!* shows at Birmingham Hippodrome on Sat 6 May. The company will also perform *Mozart's The Magic Flute* at the venue from Wed 3 to Fri 5 May

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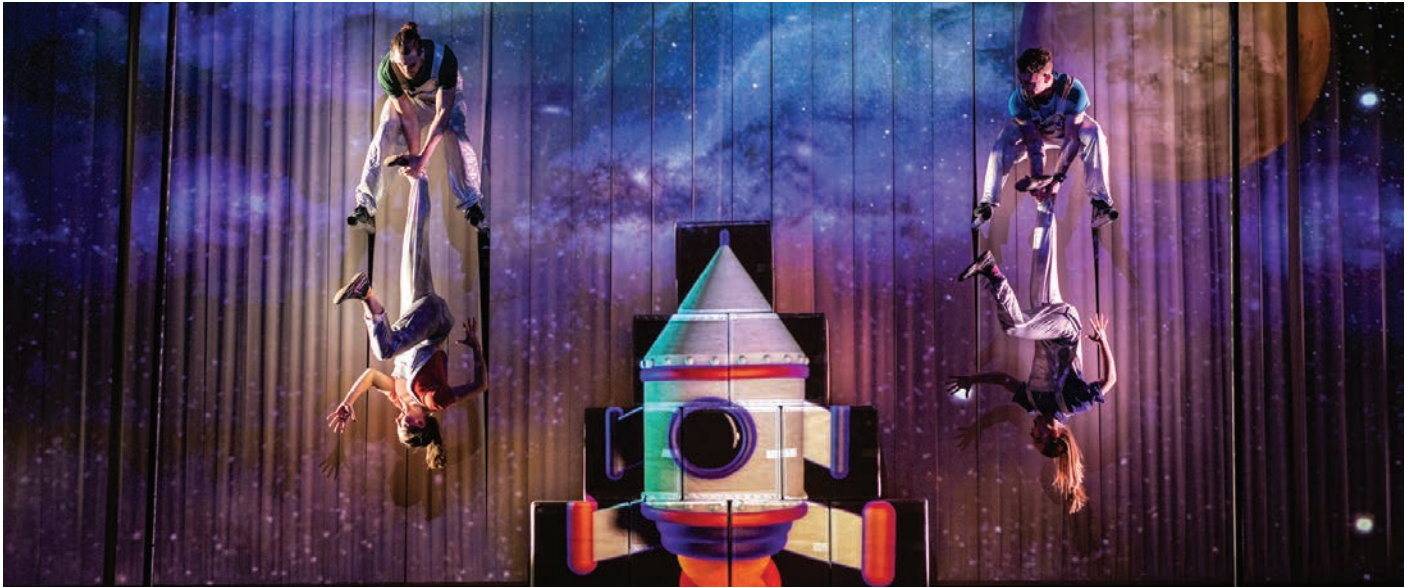


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What's On

Dance previews from across the region



Motionhouse: Starchitects Lichfield Garrick, Wed 5 & Thurs 6 April

Leamington-based dance company Motionhouse’s current touring production, Starchitects, is full of surprises, packed with fun, and revisits the magic of our childhood imaginations. The captivating cosmic adventure combines digital projections with dynamic, thrilling and gravity-defying choreography, presented in Motionhouse’s renowned and distinctive style. Integrating acrobatics and elements of circus with breathtaking dance, the company remind

the adults in the audience of a time when they too had boundless amounts of energy with which to play, climb, run, skip and jump all day long! Boasting a storyline that’s funny, thrilling and easy to follow - five children on a sleepover dream of reaching the moon from their bedroom - Starchitects is a perfect theatrical experience for every age group.

Nadiya & Kai: Once Upon A Time

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 4 April; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Thurs 13 April

Strictly stars Nadiya Bychkova and Kai Widdrington here team up in their own production for the very first time, presenting an evening of dance which the publicity for the show describes as ‘a celebration of their wonderful relationship both on and off the dancefloor’.

Following the path they’ve taken from childhood to Strictly via the ballroom, the production brings together ‘beautiful choreography, stunning costumes and a talented cast of dancers and musicians’.



Mama

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 26 April

The ‘beauty of chaos’ is mixed with ‘the quietness of the human soul’ in this brand-new work from Olivier Award-winning choreographer Botis Seva and his internationally touring hip-hop collective, Far From The Norm.

Hailed for the original and fearless nature of their output, the company aim to challenge perceptions of hip-hop. They also aspire to create work that not only empowers ordinary people but invites debate on social political issues and the contemporary world.

“We plunge audiences into an unforgiving world fraying at the seams,” says Botis. “It is a world where dark colonial secrets start to see the light, and where once-loved communities begin to crumble.”



Propel Dance: The Snow Queen

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sun 23 April; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 27 April

Birmingham-based professional all-wheelchair-user dance company Propel Dance are here presenting their first-ever production, a contemporary retelling, through music and movement, of Hans Christian Andersen’s famous story of The Snow Queen.

“We care deeply about equity and equality of opportunity - it’s why we exist,” says Propel Dance Artistic Director Helen Mason. “There are few professional opportunities for wheelchair dancers, and we want to see that change; to create something that enables progression and inspiration for future generations.”

FAITH AND HOPE

Rhiannon Faith's new show holds a mirror to a society at tipping point...



Choreographer Rhiannon Faith talks about the new work of dance theatre her company is bringing to Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) next month...

Can you explain the storyline that unfolds in Drowntown, Rhiannon?

The show mirrors our current world crisis, our experiences of isolation and loneliness, and our future of social-economical uncertainty. We meet six strangers, who come to the beach alone, deep in their own personal pain. When they realise they can't leave, and that the lifeguard has left them to fend for themselves, we visit their inner spaces of suffering. There are glimpses of connectedness and support, and we see if hope can pull them together, or is it just too late...?

What are the overriding themes of the show?

Drowntown is about brokenness within ourselves and our communities. On a beach, six strangers explore a societal sickness, where some of the symptoms are loneliness, isolation and shame. The show unravels the lives of people who are broken, searching for something or someone to save them.

What inspired you to want to create a show exploring this subject matter?

When I see something unfair or unjust happening to marginalised groups, I want to speak up about it, bring it to people's attention, so that it's something we think about. We are then able to make a choice about how we want to move forward and change it. The work zooms in on the profound neglect of members of our community via the insidious construction of wealth and power. I want to dismantle barriers of shame and disgrace, and the work tackles these issues.

Have you found it emotionally challenging to work with these themes?

Yes, it's a difficult show; it's dark and enduring. Both making the work and seeing how it impacts audiences has been an emotional experience. The work resonates because it rips the plaster off and looks right at the wound itself. The work is autobiographical, and so the performers are

sharing wounded parts of themselves. But with time, wounds heal - and it's the healing, a moment of tenderness or compassion from a stranger, that pulls them and us through.

Can you explain the importance of the seaside setting in terms of the show?

The seaside holds so much. It's a place of calm, beauty, meditation, relaxation, but it's also a place where people drown or go to die. It's total light and total darkness. That's what Drowntown is about: the heavy shadows in our lives, but also the will to find a moral compass and make things better. I started with a quote - "There's a sickness aboard the land" (Scott Peck) - and we began researching nautical phrases like 'feeling overwhelmed' and 'can't keep your head above water' that slip into our everyday descriptions of emotional experiences, and which fed into the work. We had residencies to make the work in Jaywalk, Clacton-on-Sea and Great Yarmouth - all highly stigmatised, where the communities are working with great levels of poverty and deprivation, where all the people we met were kind and welcoming. It felt like the right setting to speak about the human condition.

Can a show like Drowntown effect change?

I think a true inner experience can change us and therefore effect change. Drowntown is an invitation to think about how we look at one another, and to make a decision to look softly, without judgement.

You made a 15-minute lockdown film connected to the show: Drowntown Lockdown. What did you aim to achieve with the film?

The film was a digital prologue of the stage show, that we made in five days during the lockdown. It offers a window into the emotional lives of the characters who will eventually find themselves on the beach at the beginning of the Drowntown stage show. Created to keep the team together and to sustain the dynamic of the powerful

emotions involved in the piece, the film aims to offer just a small glimpse of the characters' worlds. It was made to recognise and respond to vulnerable members of the community with care, and to encourage us to encounter one another with openness and love.

Career-wise, what initially inspired you, and what's been your driving force along the way?

At the start, I think I just felt like ideas and feelings made sense to me much more when I saw them in a show. When I learned how to make that my language, I then needed to figure out what I wanted to say. My family influence me loads. They have always fought for human rights, as teachers, union leaders, lawyers, care workers. To be honest, the constant in all my work is love. I know how that might sound, but actually I think it's brave to say. I make work about the human experience, and at the heart of that, the most essential thing that we truly know and we truly need, is love; to give it and to receive it. If we live without it by no choice of our own, that's where pain begins. Life can be really hard. I care about people and believe that by helping one another, things become easier. I guess that's what is driving me right now.

What ambitions do you have for the future, Rhiannon?

I would really like to make a mainstage show. I already have it in my head, I just need everything else to catch up. Rhiannon Faith Company has just become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, so I'm really looking forward to the exciting projects we have planned, both touring and with our Harlow communities - Rhiannon Faith Company is based at Harlow Playhouse. Oh, and an ethical revolution...

.....
Rhiannon Faith Company's Drowntown shows at Birmingham's Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) on Wednesday 3 May.

Film highlights in April...

Air CERT tbc (112 mins)

Starring **Viola Davis, Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Jason Bateman, Gustaf Skarsgård, Chris Messina**
Directed by **Ben Affleck**

Ben Affleck returns to the director's chair to helm a film in which he also takes his place in an all-star cast. Affleck plays Nike co-founder Phil Knight, who, in the mid-1980s, attempts to breathe life into the company's badly failing basketball-apparel division by bringing in sports-marketing executive Sonny Vaccaro (Matt Damon). Nike badly need a miracle, and luckily Sonny stumbles across one: a videotape of an up-and-coming rookie with an out-of-this-world talent.

That rookie is - yep, you guessed it - Michael Jordan. And so begins the story of the partnership that created Air Jordan, the brand that revolutionised the world of sports and contemporary culture...

Although Air is a kind-of biopic about the world's greatest basketball player, it doesn't actually feature the world's greatest basketball player - at least not as a character played by an actor: the film instead uses archived footage of Jordan and focuses on his legacy rather than the man himself.

Released Wed 5 April



The Super Mario Bros.

Movie CERT PG (92 mins)

With the voices of **Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy, Charlie Day, Jack Black, Keegan-Michael Key, Seth Rogen** Directed by **Aaron Horvath** and **Michael Jelenic**

You've played the game, now see the film. Nintendo's Super Mario Bros is brought to the big screen with a voice cast led by Chris Pratt in a story that will be familiar to anybody who's a fan of the iconic platformer.

Mario, a plumber from Brooklyn - who the movie's co-director, Aaron Horvath, describes as "a blue-collar guy from a family of Italian immigrants" - travels through an underground labyrinth with his brother, Luigi, to defeat arch-nemesis Bowser...

The new release marks the third time Super Mario Bros has been given the film treatment; an animated movie in 1986 was followed by a live actioner in 1993, featuring Bob Hoskins as the lead character.

Released Fri 7 April

The Pope's Exorcist CERT tbc

Starring **Russell Crowe, Franco Nero, Ralph Ineson, Alex Essoe, Daniel Zovatto, Peter DeSouza-Feighoney** Directed by **Julius Avery**

Although the canon of films about exorcism is already of a significant size, there's always room for a new recruit.

This latest arrival is a historical horror thriller inspired by the case files of the Vatican's official chief exorcist, Father Gabriele Amorth - a man who performed and documented in excess of 100,000 exorcisms during his lifetime.

The film finds Amorth - played in traditional deadpan style by Russell Crowe -

investigating a young boy's terrifying possession. In the process he uncovers a centuries-old conspiracy which the Vatican has desperately tried to keep hidden. Expect spewing blood, twisting heads and the vomiting of dead birds...

Just your average day in the life of a demon-fighting exorcist really...

Released Fri 7 April



Renfield CERT tbc

Starring **Nicholas Hoult, Nicolas Cage, Awkwafina, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Brandon Scott Jones, Ben Schwartz**
Directed by **Chris McKay**

This modern monster movie finds Nicholas Hoult playing the title character of Renfield, the tortured aide to history's most narcissistic boss: Count Dracula (Nicolas Cage).

Forced to procure his master's prey and do his every bidding, Renfield is determined to break free of the vampire's shackles and find out how life looks beyond the shadow of the Prince of Darkness.

Problem is, he first needs to figure out how to end his co-dependency...

Cage's Dracula is very much a supporting character in the film, but the Oscar-winning actor has made it clear that he'd love to take a bigger, er, *bite* at the challenge of playing Bram Stoker's legendary bloodsucker at some stage in the future.

Released Fri 14 April



Guy Ritchie's The Covenant CERT tbc

Starring **Jake Gyllenhaal, Antony Starr, Dar Salim, Alexander Ludwig, Jonny Lee Miller, Bobby Schofield**
Directed by **Guy Ritchie**

As expected with a Guy Ritchie movie, high-octane action sequences abound in The Covenant.

But there's a difference with this one. While the London-born director's familiar authorial stamp is very much in evidence, the film also explores the subjects of friendship, brotherhood and internal conflict.

Such themes certainly mark an unexpected change of pace and direction for the man who built his reputation on adrenaline-pumping movies like Snatch and Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels. The storyline focuses on an American sergeant in Afghanistan (Gyllenhaal) who, injured during a shootout against militants and saved by his Afghan interpreter, pays the debt by saving the interpreter's family against all the odds.

Released Fri 21 April



Big George Foreman CERT tbc

Starring **Khris Davi, Forest Whitaker, Jasmine Mathews, Sulican Jones, Lawrence Gilliard Jr, John Magaro**
Directed by **George Tillman Jr**

Subtitled 'The Miraculous Story of the Once and Future Heavyweight Champion of the World', Big George Foreman does what it says on the tin: tells the story of the life and times of the Texas-born boxer whose stellar career included the legendary 'Rumble in the Jungle' encounter with Muhammad Ali in Zaire in 1974.

But there's much more to Foreman's story than the fight with Ali. When, after a near-death experience that sees him forsaking the boxing ring in favour of the pulpit, he realises his community is struggling both spiritually and financially, Foreman takes the decision to return to the ring...

He then makes history by reclaiming his title, and in so doing becomes the oldest and most improbable World Heavyweight Boxing Champion ever...

Released Fri 28 April



Paint CERT tbc (96 mins)

Starring **Owen Wilson, Stephen Root, Wendi McLendon-Covey, Michaela Watkins, Lusia Strus, Ciara Renée**
Directed by **Brit McAdams**

TV-watching art fans may well be familiar with Bob Ross, who fronted an instructional television series titled The Joy Of Painting back in the 1980s and early '90s.

Bob died in 1995, but his shows continue to be screened - and although he's not mentioned in Paint, it's fairly evident that

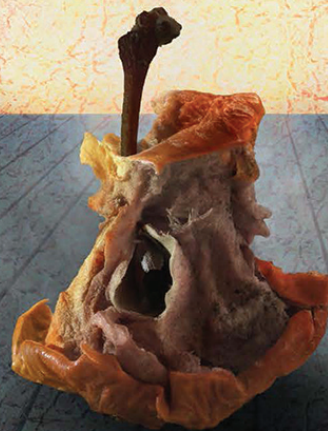
he's the inspiration behind Owen Wilson's character of Carl Nargle.

The much-loved host of a long-running instructional painting series on Vermont public television, Carl finds the colour draining from life's canvas when a younger painter is hired to attract a different demographic - a development that leaves him feeling more insecure than ever before about his own artistic talents...

Released Fri 28 April

Shakespearean tragedy

Popular lockdown read adapted for the stage...



Hamnet, Maggie O'Farrell's bestselling novel about the Shakespeare family's loss of a child, was one of the country's most popular reads during lockdown. A brand-new production of Lolita Chakrabarti's stage adaptation of the book is this month reopening the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon...

Author Maggie O'Farrell scored an unlikely hit when her 2020 novel, *Hamnet* - which imagines the life of William Shakespeare and the women and family who influenced his work - became an international bestseller. The book sold more than 1.5 million copies, earned umpteen awards - including Waterstones Book of the Year - and became a hugely popular lockdown read, in part because the tragedy at its heart drew parallels with what was happening in the world during the pandemic.

Set in 1582, the story follows the lives of William Shakespeare (unnamed in the novel) and Anne (in the book, Agnes) Hathaway as they fall in love and start a family.

William moves to London to forge his career in the world of theatre while Agnes stays at home in Warwickshire to raise their three children. But then tragedy strikes, as their only son, 11-year-old Hamnet, succumbs to the bubonic plague.

Although the parents largely confront their loss alone, something extraordinary is born out of their suffering - and not just the legendary play that (almost) takes their son's name...

A stage adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's novel will be the first production to be mounted in the Royal Shakespeare Company's newly restored Swan Theatre, in the heart of the town where the family lived. It couldn't be more poignant, according to the RSC's acting artistic director, Erica Whyman, who commissioned and will direct the show.

"Maggie's beautiful novel moved and inspired me in the darkest days of lockdown, as it did for so many," she says. "It is especially fitting that this production will reopen the unique Swan Theatre, evoking, as it does, a different time in the town - one that not only gave birth to our house playwright but one which knew what it was to live through waves of pandemic, of grief and recovery."

The novel has been adapted for the stage by playwright Lolita Chakrabarti, best known for her award-winning stage version of Yann Martel's hugely popular novel, *Life Of Pi*, which has just transferred to Broadway. Like *Hamnet*, that book also focused on a child,

but one surviving on a lifeboat with a bunch of wild animals. The earthbound tale of *Hamnet* ought to be an easier one to reimagine for the stage. Or maybe not..

"You'd think so," laughs actor-turned-playwright Lolita. "There's no animals anyway... and we're on land the whole time! But Maggie's book is so internal and so beautiful - it's full of nature and internal thought. So that's the challenge, I suppose.

"I think I've got a starter reputation for taking the impossible and making it somehow happen, but it's always a challenge and a risk; people love these books and have a relationship with them, and then I'm coming in with my version."

Lolita says it's been a fascinating task to consider Shakespeare as a man, not a genius, as well as to discover the family behind him and how they influenced his work. But the story itself is clearly much more than a historical biography of the Bard.

"While the facts about the Shakespeare family are limited, this is a universal story about a family's dynamics, the devastating effects of a child's death, the necessary reinvention after loss and how new writing is formed. It has been a privilege to recreate and imagine the life of an often forgotten but important figure: Mrs Shakespeare."

But if Anne Hathaway is a potentially forgotten figure, the novel is still very fresh in people's minds - something Lolita admits brings an added pressure (she worked on *Pi* almost 20 years after it came out). *Hamnet*'s popularity means the play's 11-week run has already sold out.

"When I took this on, I was thinking, yes, I love Shakespeare, I've been in quite a few Shakespeare plays, I've studied him quite a lot, and I loved the story, but the impact of the novel has been much more visible because it's so recent. Everyone I meet has either got it on their shelf, or their mum bought it, or they're about to read it, or yes, they must read it... the energy behind it is stronger, so it's been quite daunting."

Fortunately Lolita has had the support of the "obviously brilliant" Maggie O'Farrell along the way, not least because the pair quickly developed a mutual respect.

"It's about establishing a relationship,

because theatre and novel writing are very different disciplines - and, of course, this is her baby and her story, and she's done all the research.

"What's great is that she's been very respectful and hands-off, but offered her overview and storytelling impulses. When she came into rehearsals, I told her I'm the midwife to your story, but she said 'No, not at all, we're co-parents.' I thought that was a good analysis!"

The analogy works, she says, because unlike a TV or movie adaptation, the stage version effectively becomes the playwright's interpretation of the book rather than a scene-by-scene recreation.

"With theatre, I feel like I have to ingest the novel, ingest what she's trying to say, and then produce my own version of it. It's more about the relationships we see on stage rather than the internal relationships we read about."

Recreating a novel she's grown to love in the town where the story is set adds another layer to Lolita's enjoyment of the project. During her research, she undertook a whistle-stop tour of Stratford's tourist hot spots, but found that wandering around the town - albeit 300 years after the family lived there - was just as important in getting to know them.

"It's extraordinary really. Just walking the streets and thinking of them, the Shakespeares, walking the same streets, is a very different experience to reading about it.

"I thought of Shakespeare because Maggie's book gives us the man, and his wife, and his children, and I thought, gosh, if he came back now and saw this theatre that only performs his plays, what would he think?"

"Performing the show here will make it live in a very immediate way which I don't think you'd get anywhere else. I hope audiences will think they've met Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway."

.....

Hamnet shows at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Saturday 1 April to Saturday 17 June.



Grayson's Art Club

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham,
until Sun 25 June

This critically acclaimed major exhibition - which has had its stay at MAC extended into the summer - comprises more than 100 artworks selected by Turner Prize winner Grayson Perry, his wife Philippa, and guest celebrities from season three of the hit TV series, Grayson's Art Club.

Using art as a way of 'bringing together the nation' by encouraging people to celebrate their collective creativity, the Channel Four show features work submitted by the public in a wide variety of mediums, including photography, painting, textiles and sculpture. "The great thing about the Art Club exhibition," says Grayson, "is that everybody who comes will find something they like because it's so varied. And then they will identify with it and go: 'Ooh, I think I could have a go at that.'

"That's what I think the joy of Art Club is; that people can see themselves in the different characters, and then they might have found their creative outlet."



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Sensing Naples

Compton Verney, Warwickshire,
Sat 1 April - Sun 31 December

Historic works from Compton Verney's Naples Collection are rehung and reimagined in this interactive exhibition, which aims to bring to life the sights, smells, sounds, tastes and sensations experienced by those who visit the famous Italian city.

The show comes complete with two new contemporary sculptures. Created by DYSPLA - an award-winning, neuro-divergent-led arts studio - and Aaron McPeake - an artist who makes works that deal with his own experience of sight loss - the sculptures have been commissioned in partnership with Unlimited, an organisation that supports, funds and promotes new work by disabled artists.

Aspire: Contemporary Art Interventions

The Commandery, Worcester,
Sat 1 April - Sun 3 September

"My intervention show interprets my thoughts and feelings about The Commandery as a physical space," explains artist Wayne Warren, "but it also adds a contemporary 21st-century response to the 1,000 years of history contained within the fabulous building." Wayne's exhibition comprises eight works on the themes of aspiration, dreams and ambition. The pieces have been placed at significant points around the building. One of the artworks, commissioned especially for the exhibition at The Commandery, features gold leaf on oak leaves and acorns. This is situated on a stool made of wood from the Boscobel Oak, purported to be the tree in which King Charles II hid when fleeing from the Battle of Worcester.



Belonging To Us

School of Jewellery, Birmingham,
Mon 3 - Fri 28 April

Curated by Craftspace - and subtitled Nurturing Women Through Making - Belonging To Us is a celebration of 10 years of Shelanu, a craft collective that supports refugee and migrant women to make and sell contemporary jewellery. Alongside learning new making skills and creating high-quality craft, the women are also supported to improve their English, learn business skills and run workshops for the community. The exhibition sees Shelanu launching Nurture, a new range of jewellery made 'more sustainably'. The jewellery will be displayed alongside examples of the collective's previous work.

Carnival Glass Society 40th Anniversary Exhibition

Stourbridge Glass Museum,
Mon 8 April - Sun 5 November

The Carnival Glass Society is celebrating its 40th anniversary by presenting this fascinating exhibition at Stourbridge Glass Museum.



Carnival glass is pressed glass that is usually patterned and often hand-finished to obtain different shapes, then iridised to give a spectacular 'oil on water' effect.

The exhibition - which features around 300 items, including rarities not often seen - tells the story of carnival glass across the last century; from the early years after its introduction in America in 1907, through its spread across the world in the 1920s and '30s, to more recent times, when the enthusiasm of collectors spawned a revival of interest.

Eugene Palmer: Standing Still

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Mon 8 May

A figurative painter whose art explores the British black diaspora, Eugene Palmer here presents an exhibition of works based on two family celebrations: the marriage of his youngest daughter and a family reunion spanning four generations.

The exhibition includes Ann, 2022, a painting recently acquired by Wolverhampton Art Gallery for its collection. The image below is titled Caleb and Anne, 2022.



A FINE TUNE

The Magic Flute gets a makeover...



Welsh National Opera's new production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* aims to cast fresh light on the 18th-century classic - as its designer, Loren Elstein, explains to What's On...

One of Mozart's most popular operas, *The Magic Flute* is also one of his most enigmatic. It follows Tamino's search for Pamina, a beautiful woman who has been taken prisoner by the magician Sarastro. Tamino undergoes trials to release Pamina, while Sarastro goes to battle with Pamina's mother, the Queen of the Night, in a dramatic conclusion.

It is a complex story, and for centuries the opera has puzzled audiences and academics alike, but this uncertainty also offers directors and designers the opportunity to place their own interpretations on the work. For Welsh National Opera's (WNO) new production, which comes to Birmingham Hippodrome next month, Director Daisy Evans and Designer Loren Elstein have gone back to the basic plot - but added a few modern twists.

"Anything is possible within *The Magic Flute*, and it's been fun to do," says Loren. "It's about making it relatable, and so really it's about two parents who have their different opinions about what is best for their child, and it's them navigating how to do what they think is best."

The work begins with a back story - shared with the audience during the opening overture - about Sarastro and the Queen of the Night, the parents of Pamina. When their relationship broke, so did their worlds.

"It's really important to have a sense that it feels that the world has fractured," explains Loren. "It used to be united but has since split up into two parts. So the Queen of the Night and the King of the Day were in unison at the beginning of time but not any longer, which sets up this new separated world."

"That led us to rewriting the rules and creating this new world, so that we were able to make it relevant. We were inspired by the idea of it being in a sort of gaming aesthetic, with a set logic or structure to the world, with a very bound set of rules that the characters have to stay within."

Loren's sets and costumes create this new separated world in a series of constantly turning staircases that sometimes allow characters to cross from one realm into the next and sometimes prevent them from doing so.

"It's like a Rubik's Cube or an astrolabe, so it's constantly spinning and is made up of lots of different staircases that twist and turn and join up. To be able to create this new logic and rules to the space, certain people have different access to different levels. So when the staircases spin round and connect, they create a pathway for some people to

make an entrance into the space.

"I'm really interested in the idea of these different staircases being like a map or a labyrinth and unexpected forces being at play, balancing precariously on different levels."

Loren has designed for dance, theatre, film and music tours at venues including the Old Vic, Lyric Hammersmith and Playhouse Theatre. This is her fourth time working with WNO, having also designed for *Don Pasquale*, *Migrations* and *Cherry Town*, *Moscow*. Her designs and costumes for *The Magic Flute* not only draw on geometry but also feature strong colours and neon lights.

"It's all very saturated with colour, like a video games aesthetic which is very youthful. The day world is the Palace of the Day, Sarastro's world, which is very much about fact, form and logic, so is sharp angles and very geometrical."

"In contrast, the world of the Night Time has more of a sense of freedom. There's no filter; it's a neon world which picks up different shapes and textures that disappear when you go into the Sun Palace."

The production also features puppetry, as two of the characters - the bird catcher Papageno and his partner, Papagena - are always accompanied by flying birds.

Daisy and Loren have looked at how to give the female roles more agency in this new *Magic Flute*.

"We found it quite problematic at the beginning, trying to work out how to tell the story in 2022 because inequality seems to have been very present in the original work. Equality is very important in this piece. We were looking at how women are treated within the original *Magic Flute* and how we can make that relevant for today."

"So the original Queen of the Night is depicted as this horrific woman who is blown into smithereens for being evil. And Pamina is placed as a prisoner who needs the prince, Tamino, to come and save her. There is also the sense of the masculine characters going on a trial to be initiated into this very male-orientated world."

"We wanted to change that, so the back story sets up the idea of Tamino and Pamina having known each other as kids, so they are old friends. So when Tamino is first shown the photo of Pamina, he is on a quest to find his long-lost friend rather than just a beautiful woman."

"And the reason Pamina ends up in the Sun Palace is her conscious choice. Her mother had brought her up in the Night Time and

taught her everything about the Night Time. Pamina makes a decision to learn everything about the Day Time, so she chooses to go back to her father's palace to learn everything. It's giving the characters more control over their decisions."

The balance continues throughout the story, with Tamino and Pamina facing the trials together, rather than Tamino winning Pamina's freedom, as is the case in the original opera.

"The final image is of the world being whole and complete, and we've crowned Tamino and Pamina as Prince and Princess of the Twilight. So it's really established that they have made a decision to start a new world, based on all the information they've learned from both sides, and it's about embracing harmony and difference of opinion. It's more a rejection of division than coming back to the original form of things."

"The piece is saying that this new world embraces harmony and a difference of opinion; that there isn't just one way of looking at things."

And the production also aims to follow Mozart's original by displaying a lighthearted touch.

"Where it makes sense for logic to drive the story forward, we do so, but there are some things that are there just for fun."

"Mozart originally wrote it for a friend who was a musical performer rather than an opera singer, so I think it was written more for light entertainment, and we've tried to keep that element. So it's lighthearted and funny, even though it does have these morals in there."

"*The Magic Flute* is always known as a family show, and being a parent I was very aware of how we portray the characters, and making them accessible and relevant and having a role model for the younger audience."

"It's a very strong story between mother and daughter and father and daughter and Pamina and Tamino's coming of age and what is expected of them as young people."

"This production is definitely similar to Mozart's original story - we've just stripped it back and shifted it slightly so that it makes it more relevant to today."

.....

Welsh National Opera's brand-new version of *The Magic Flute* shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 3 to Friday 5 May

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NEW EVENT

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LEGOLANDDiscoveryCentre.com/Birmingham



Events previews from around the region



LEGO City: City Of Champions

Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham, until Sun 9 July

The Lego City Minifigure team - Ricky Rocket Racer, Mech-Max, Go-To Gary and Fearless Fi - have taken over Legoland Discovery Centre to set epic missions for little ones and their families to complete. Testing your skills with each mission, you will rescue animals, find messages in the

street art and have a go at brick-building games, in the process earning an exclusive limited-edition card and sticker. For £5 per person, there will also be the chance to build your own police car or fire engine in the on-site creative workshop.



Spring Steam Gala Severn Valley Railway, Fri 14 - Sun 16 April

The Severn Valley Railway's (SVR) annual spring festival of steam locomotives returns for a three-day extravaganza. Visitors will be able to hop on and off SVR's

16-mile line, checking out VIP guests such as the GWR 4079 Pendennis Castle and GWR Small Prairie 4555. The valley's resident steam fleet will also be available to enjoy.

Insomnia: The Gaming Festival

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 7 - Mon 10 April

Immerse yourself in a world of non-stop gaming at Insomnia, with everything from the latest video games to retro classics available to enjoy. Try your hand at VR games, test your skills in esports competitions, or get lost in the world of tabletop games. Guests can meet fellow gamers, attend panels and meet & greets with their favourite creators, and compete in tournaments for prizes. Live performances, cosplay competitions, and the latest gaming gear also feature.



International Living History Festival

Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Sat 15 & Sun 16 April

The International Living History Festival makes its debut at its new home of Avoncroft Museum this month. Across the weekend, the venue's 19-acre site and its historic buildings will be brought to life with re-enactors, who will be representing periods from the Bronze Age right through to the Cold War. Hands-on activities and a historically themed market further add to the event's appeal.





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Events previews from around the region



Camp Severn Kids Festival

West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury, Fri 28 April - Mon 1 May

Taking on a Wild West theme for its 2023 edition, Camp Severn Kids Festival returns to West Mid Showground late this month. Visiting families can opt either to camp on-site for the whole weekend or make a day trip to the festival, with all activities included in

the ticket price. Attractions include Wild West-themed shows, BMX & stunt team displays, family circus sessions, inflatable games and a Canyon Desert beach.



Blooming Marvellous

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April

Spring into the Easter holiday at Black Country Living Museum. Visitors can take a step back in time to discover how people of a bygone age would welcome-in the spring season. The museum's historic characters will be busily preparing for springtime, making

puddings, buying clothes, and carrying out a good old-fashioned spring clean. And as the museum's gardens begin to bloom, families can follow the activity trail and find out all about the on-site plants and what makes them so special.

Easter at Thinktank

Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April

Thinktank hosts an Easter egg hunt trail with a difference this month (1 - 16 April). Instead of traditional chocolate delights, the hidden eggs are from the museum's nature collection. See how many you can find, and receive a sticker for all your hard work. Plus, on weekdays over Easter (3 - 7 & 10 - 14 April), families can join in with Eclectic Electrics Science Busking drop-in sessions, playing with gadgets and gizmos that are powered by electricity. They can also get hands-on with chemistry, courtesy of ChemiStories, bringing to life the work of Opportunity, a robotic rover on the surface of Mars.



Easter at West Midland Safari Park

West Midland Safari Park, Bewdley, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April

Children visiting the Safari Park this Easter will get to meet Bramble Bunny, who'll be presenting a special interactive show to celebrate the venue's 50th birthday. There's also the chance for families to enjoy all the fun and excitement of looking for a giant egg along the Discovery Trail. When they find it, they have to guess how many eggs it contains - and maybe win an overnight stay in a Rhino Lodge for up to four people!





thinktank
Birmingham science museum



MIND-BLOWING

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Events previews from around the region



St George's Day Extravaganza Tamworth Castle, Sat 22 April

The ever-popular St George's Day Extravaganza makes a welcome return, with this year's programme of entertainment featuring jousting, archery, a living-history camp, fairground rides, stalls and numerous

children's activities. Families can check out an animatronic Ice Dragon and White Walker - inspired by hit television series Game Of Thrones - as they roam around the castle grounds.



Woodland Tribe Compton Verney, Warwickshire, Wed 5 - Sun 9 April

Returning to Compton Verney this Easter, the highly rated 'masters of constructive play', Woodland Tribe, are offering families the chance to build the ultimate treehouse.

Designed for children over the age of six, the activity aims to get youngsters thinking creatively as they use real tools to fashion a woodland hideaway.

Easter at the Stratford Butterfly Farm

Stratford-upon-Avon Butterfly Farm, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April

Eastertime visitors to the Stratford Butterfly Farm can stroll amongst some of the world's most stunning and colourful butterflies in a tropical rainforest setting, complete with fish-filled pools, splashing waterfalls and beautiful blooms.

The always-popular Meet The Mini-Beast handling sessions & demonstrations take place daily throughout the holiday (except on Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday).

And as a special Easter treat, Holt Hall Apiary's beekeeper, Matthew Ingram, visits the venue - as do his bees! - on Wednesday 12 April.



CountryTastic

Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Thurs 6 April

Featuring interactive learning experiences, farmyard friends and countryside fun, CountryTastic is an immersive day out designed with kids aged under 11 in mind. Youngsters can 'ask the farmer' questions about their favourite farmyard animals in the Muddy Boots Theatre, learn about where their food comes from and take part in hands-on cookery sessions, get stuck into a selection of craft activities, and develop their bushcraft and den-building skills in the outdoor activity zone.



A FAIRYTALE EASTER
1st April – 16th April 2023

HUNT FOR THE
WHITE RABBIT



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Events previews from around the region



Image credit: George Harrison 2019

Gaiety Musical Theatre Festival

Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, Sun 30 April

The UK's first outdoor festival dedicated solely to musical theatre makes its debut this month.

Gaiety Musical Theatre Festival features performances by, among others, Collabro, Kerry Ellis (pictured), Marisha Wallace, Lee Mead and Cassidy Janson, all of whom will be accompanied by the London Musical Theatre Orchestra.

Other entertainment on the day includes theatre workshops, a community bandstand, a silent disco and a traditional funfair.



Eastnor Chillifest

Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire, Sun 30 April & Mon 1 May

Things will certainly be hotting up this May Bank Holiday weekend at Eastnor Castle, courtesy of the venue's annual ChilliFest.

Perfect for those who enjoy a bit of spice, the event provides visitors with the chance to 'try & buy' a variety of chilli products from a wide range of stallholders.

Attractions at this year's get-together include cookery demonstrations, a chilli-eating competition, Bhangra dance workshops, stilt-walking and fire shows.

Live music is provided by Los Squideros, The Breaks and Baixa Beats.



Swingamajig Festival Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Sun 30 April

Bringing together an eclectic blend of music, dance and cabaret, family-friendly Swingamajig aims to celebrate its 10th birthday in style.

The festival features two stages of live music, a seated theatre hosting internationally acclaimed cabaret, swing dancing taster

workshops & performances, and DJs playing the very best in electro swing.

For those wanting to carry on having fun when the festival finishes, The Mill in Digbeth will be hosting an adults-only after-party.



British Open Squash 2023

Edgbaston Priory Club, Birmingham, Sun 9 & Mon 10 April, and then The Rep, Birmingham, Tues 11 - Sun 16 April

One of the most prestigious and historic tournaments in professional squash, the British Open is being held in Birmingham for the first time in over two decades.

The tournament will see 96 of the best PSA World Tour stars - including reigning champions Paul Coll and Hania El

Hammy - battle it out for the coveted titles.

The first two days of the event take place at Edgbaston Priory Club. Play then moves to Birmingham Rep, where the action will unfold on an all-glass show court.

Places to visit across the Midlands



West Midland Safari & Leisure Park

Spring Grove, Bewdley, DY12 1LF
wmsp.co.uk

West Midland Safari & Leisure Park offers a great opportunity to see animals roaming freely - and to do so from the safety of your own car!

The 100-acre venue is home to a variety of exotic and unusual species, many of which you're sure to encounter during the course of the four-mile drive-through safari.

The venue also boasts an adventure theme park - Land Of The Living Dinosaurs - Boj Giggly Park - and an Ice Age attraction.

Price: (Advance tickets) £22 adults and child (aged 3 - 15), £19 senior (aged 65-plus), carers and children under two go free.



Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

Millennium Point, Curzon Street
Birmingham, B4 7XG
birminghammuseums.org.uk/thinktank

Thinktank features over 200 interactive exhibits on science and discovery, a programme of workshops, shows and demonstrations, and a digital planetarium.

It also boasts its very own mini city: MiniBrum - a child-sized world created for youngsters under the age of eight. Meanwhile, outside, the Science Garden provides fun activities and surprises for the whole family to enjoy.

Price: £15.50 adults, £7.50 children (aged 3 - 15), £12.50 concessions, under-threes go free.



The Bear Grylls Adventure

Exhibition Way, Marston Green, B40 1NT
beargryllsadventure.com

Celebrity adventurer Bear Grylls has certainly pulled out all the stops with this popular visitor attraction.

Activities include high ropes, indoor archery, indoor climbing, axe throwing, escape rooms and a Royal Marines-inspired assault course.

For the 'more courageous' visitor, there's the Shark Dive, which involves getting 'up close and personal' with black tip reef sharks and cownose rays...

...Or if you fancy experiencing the thrill of free-falling at 12,000ft, then iFly is for you.

Price: Activities range from £20 to £120 (advanced).



Severn Valley Railway

Kidderminster: Station Dr, DY10 1QX
Bridgnorth: 2 Hollybush Rd, WV16 4AX
svr.co.uk

Operating mainly steam-hauled passenger trains between Bridgnorth, Bewdley and Kidderminster, this much-loved railway transports visitors on a journey of about 16 miles along the beautiful Severn Valley. The journey includes a stop-off at The Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley, where passengers can check out some special locomotives.

Those starting their journey at Bridgnorth will also have the option of stop-offs at Bewdley and Kidderminster, the latter of which boasts a railway museum.

Prices: Tickets start at £17 adult and £11 child (aged 4 - 15) for short journeys.



Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park

Warwickshire, CV35 9HZ
comptonverney.org.uk

Compton Verney is widely considered to be an art gallery of international standing.

The Georgian house is set in more than 120 acres of Grade II listed classical parkland, which was created in the 18th century by eminent landscape architect Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

Although the original estate was split up and sold a century ago, the 'pleasure grounds' still clearly reflect the sweeping grassland, ornamental lakes and Cedars of Lebanon for which Brown is famous.

Prices: £17 adult, £8.50 young people aged 19 to 25, children aged 18 and under go free.



Black Country Living Museum

Discovery Way, Dudley, DY1 4AL
bclm.co.uk

Get stuck into some old-fashioned fun at the Black Country Living Museum.

The award-winning venue boasts more than 30 period shops and houses to explore and features a host of famous characters to help bring the region's fascinating history to life.

Visitors can participate in some deceptively simple old-school street games outside the back-to-backs and learn their ABCs backwards in an authentic Edwardian school lesson.

Price: £22.95 adult, £20.95 over-65s, £19.50 unwaged and students, £11.45 children aged three to 15, carers and children under two go free.



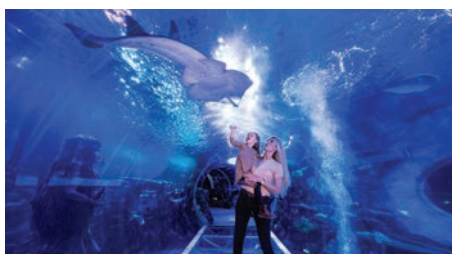
Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham

Utilita Arena Birmingham, King Edwards Road, Birmingham, B1 2AA
legolanddiscoverycentre.com/birmingham

Legoland Discovery Centre is a great place to share creative play time with your little ones. The venue houses a city builder area, a duplo farm, two rides - Kingdom's Quest and Merlin's Apprentice Ride - and a 4D cinema.

Perhaps the most impressive attraction at the centre is Lego Miniland. Built from more than 1.5 million Lego bricks, Miniland is a replica of Birmingham and includes constructions of some of the city's most famous landmarks.

Price: £23 adult and children (aged 3 - 17), carers and under-threes go free.



National Sea Life Centre

The Water's Edge, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HL
visitsealife.com/birmingham

Housing more than 2,000 creatures - including a colony of gentoo penguins, black-tip reef sharks and a giant green sea turtle - National Sea Life Centre features a world-class rescue Marine Mammal facility, which houses the UK's first-ever sea otters, Ozzy and Ola.

Other highlights include a 4D cinema, the zebra shark in Shark Lagoon and the Clownfish Kingdom tunnel. The venue also boasts the UK's only 360° Ocean Tunnel, providing for visitors the truly unique experience of 'walking through the sea'.

Price: £19 adult and children (aged 3 - 17), carers and under-threes go free.



Kenilworth Castle

Castle Green, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 1NG
english-heritage.org.uk

Discover stories of epic sieges and royal scandals at Kenilworth Castle. Once one of the country's most formidable medieval fortresses, the castle was later transformed into a spectacular Elizabethan palace by Robert Dudley in an attempt to impress his queen. Today you can explore the mighty medieval keep, climb up Tudor towers, wander through a unique Elizabethan garden and get hands-on with history in a family-friendly exhibition.

Price: Admission varies depending on the date you visit. Prices range from £12.90 - £16.30 adults, £7.70 - £10 child, £11.60-£14.50 concession.



Coventry Transport Museum

Millennium Place, Coventry, CV1 1JD
transport-museum.com

This popular museum not only houses the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles on the planet, it also tells the story of a city which changed the world through transport.

There are 14 galleries to enjoy at the venue, featuring (among other attractions) pioneering bicycles, transport champions, innovative, memorable and luxurious vehicles from the last 200 years, and last but certainly not least, the world's fastest vehicle.

Price: £14 adult, £10.50 students and senior, £7 children aged five to 16.



Avoncroft Museum

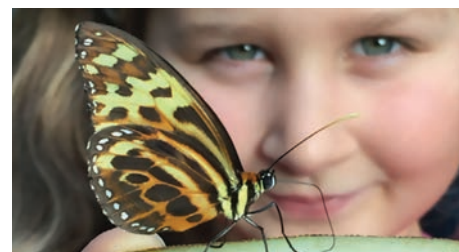
Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 4JR
avoncroft.org.uk

Spread over 19 acres of Worcestershire countryside, England's first open-air museum covers in excess of 700 years of Midlands history.

The site includes a collection of 30-plus historic buildings and structures, ranging from Worcester Cathedral's 14th-century Guesten Hall roof, to a post-Second World War Birmingham prefab.

Visitors to Avoncroft can also enjoy a wildflower meadow, period gardens and a traditional cider & perry orchard.

Price: £12.50 adult, £6.50 child (5 - 17), £10.50 concession, carers and under-fives free.



Stratford Butterfly Farm

Swan's Nest Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7LS
butterflyfarm.co.uk

Stratford Butterfly Farm is home to hundreds of the world's most spectacular butterflies.

The popular venue features a 'discovery zone' - inhabited by giant silkmths and their cocoons - and the Minibeast Metropolis - home to snakes, reptiles, amphibians and other invertebrates. The Butterfly Farm's connections to the rainforests of Belize and the Maya civilisation are also in evidence, with more than 30 replicated ancient Maya artefacts on display throughout the attraction.

Price: £8.95 adult, £6.45 students and seniors, £7.95 children aged three to 16.



Shrewsbury Flower Show

Friday 11th and Saturday 12th August 2023

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Your week-
by-week
listings guide
April 2023

the list



Propel Dance: The Snow Queen at Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton - Thurs 27 April

Music | Comedy | Theatre | Dance | Events | Visual Arts | and more!

What's On

Sat 1 - Sun 9 April



Abigail's Party - New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme
Wed 5 - Sat 15 April

Mon 10 - Sun 16 April



Luisa Omelian - Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge
Sat 15 April

Mon 17 - Sun 23 April



A Room Of One's Own - Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Shropshire
Fri 21 April

Mon 24 - Sun 30 April



The Bull And The Moon - Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton
Sat 29 April

VISUAL ARTS IN THE MIDLANDS

New Art Gallery, Walsall

BREAKING THE MOULD Major touring exhibition challenging the male-dominated narratives of post-war British sculpture by presenting a diverse and significant range of ambitious work by women, until Sun 16 April

HERE&QUEER Exhibition in which members from the LGBTQ+ community have taken ownership of the gallery's collections and the stories they tell and re-interpreted them from a queer perspective, until Sun 28 May

JOSHUA MIRABUENO Residency exhibition showcasing the results of the artist's experimentation with sculptural approaches to self-portraiture, until Sun 9 April

JOHN BECKFORD AND MATTHEW CORNFORD Exhibition offering an opportunity to reflect on the changing nature of art education and the value of creativity... until Sun 2 July

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

SNAPPERSQUAD 'NATURAL WORLD' EXHIBITION Featuring works by an independent group of photographers from across North Staffordshire & South Cheshire, until Sun 16 April

Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

THE MOON Exhibition in which visitors can discover 5,000 years of humankind's fascination with our celestial neighbour... until Sun 16 April

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

SHEMZA: ACROSS GENERATIONS Featuring the work of renowned British Pakistani Modernist artist Anwar Jalal Shemza alongside the contemporary practice of Aphra Shemza, the artist's granddaughter, until Sun 16 April

VALUABLE CONVERSATIONS: REFLECTING ON 170 YEARS OF WOLVERHAMPTON SCHOOL OF ART

Nineteen newly created works, exhibited alongside the works that inspired them, until Sun 16 April

FINE LINES: CONTEMPORARY DRAWINGS BY STEVE EVANS The geometrics of the built environment provide the inspiration for the abstract drawings featured in this exhibition by Wolverhampton-based artist Steve Evans, until Mon 1 May

EUGENE PALMER: STANDING STILL Series of paintings by internationally acclaimed Jamaican-British artist Eugene Palmer, until Mon 8 May

POP PARADE Showcasing the gallery's most iconic pop artworks by leading British and American artists, until Sun 31 Dec

Elsewhere:

ART FOR ALL Open exhibition where experienced artists showcase work alongside those just starting out, until Sun 2 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

CRAFTSPACE: {QUEER} + {METALS} The multiplicity of queerness is here explored via metalwork and metalsmithing, in an exhibition that makes visible the ways in which LGBTQIA+ creatives are shaping, disrupting and contributing to contemporary culture, until Sun 2 April, Midlands Arts Centre, B'ham

SANDY DENSEM: A DECADE OF CREATIVE EXPLORATION Showcasing Shropshire landscapes alongside mixed-media works exploring abstract concepts, until Thurs 27 April, Granary Art Gallery, Weston Park, Shropshire

PAINTING WITH WORDS Featuring works inspired by story, myth & language, until Sat 29 April, Willow Gallery, Oswestry, North Shropshire

UNLOCKING LAPWORTH'S LEGACY Exhibition showcasing the life and archive of Charles Lapworth, a geologist in the late 19th and early 20th century, until Sun 30 April, Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham

HORROR IN THE MODERNIST BLOCK High-rise towers. Concrete buildings.

In an exhibition featuring the work of 20 contemporary artists, these modernist structures are viewed through the lens of the horror genre with which they are often associated in dystopian fiction, until Mon 1 May, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

GRAYSON'S ART CLUB: THE EXHIBITION III Major exhibition featuring over 100 artworks selected by Grayson Perry, his wife Philippa, and guest celebrities during season three of the popular TV series, Grayson's Art Club, until Sun 25 June, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

CARNIVAL GLASS SOCIETY 40TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION Showcase of work exploring the history and inspirations of carnival glass manufacture, Sat 8 April - Sun 5 November, Stourbridge Glass Museum

ASSOCIATION OF ANIMAL ARTISTS Collection of animal artworks in an array of mediums and styles, Fri 28 April - Wed 31 May, Rose Patterson Art Gallery, Weston-under-Lizard, Shifnal, Shropshire



Black Honey - The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

Gigs

THE ORIELLES Sat 1 April, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

GLAM 45 Sat 1 April, The Robin, Bilston

REEF + WHEN RIVERS MEET + VOODOO SIOUX Sat 1 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

JACK RUTTER Sat 1 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

GLORY DAYS - BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN TRIBUTE Sat 1 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE STONE ROAD BAND Sat 1 April, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THE TOTAL STONE ROSES + OAYSIS Sat 1 April, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

WINGWALKERS Sat 1 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

SOLAR MOHICANS Sat 1 April, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

JESSE'S DIVIDE + ATHENA'S REVENGE Sat 1 April, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

THE ORIELLES Sun 2 April, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

ATHENA'S REVENGE + MAGIC MARY + MELIORA Sun 2 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

FEELING FUNKY Sun 2 April, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE FUREYS Sun 2 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KATHRYN ROBERTS & SEAN LAKEMAN Sun 2 April, The Hive, Shrewsbury

RPWL Mon 3 April, The Robin, Bilston

DEVIN TOWNSEND + KLONE + FIXATION Tues 4 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Tues 4 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE MATT GOSS EXPERIENCE Wed 5 April, Symphony Hall, B'ham

BOB FOX & BILLY MITCHELL Wed 5 April, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

LF + ADULT PLAY + LONGEST LINE Wed 5 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

WARD THOMAS Thurs 6 April, Birmingham Town Hall

ED SHEERAN EXPERIENCE Thurs 6 April, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

SARI SCHORR Thurs 6 April, The Robin, Bilston

NO FUN AT ALL Fri 7 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PAT O'REILLY & GOLDMASTER ALLSTARS + THE REGGAE BOYZ FEATURING MICHELLE Fri 7 April, The Robin, Bilston

CHRIS HELME Fri 7 April, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

THE CARPENTERS SONGBOOK Fri 7 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

STRICTLY UB40 Fri 7

April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MIND THE GAP Fri 7 April, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

MARTI PELLOW Fri 7 April, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

CHEMICAL BROTHERS TRIBUTE + THE DAFT PUNK EXPERIENCE Fri 7 April, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

THE UNDERCOVER HIPPIE Fri 7 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

IRN TYGR Sat 8 April, The Robin, Bilston

SAMANTICS Sat 8 April, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

ROCKFEST 2023 Sat 8 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

THE OOZES Sat 8 April, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE FLEETWOOD MAC SONGBOOK Sat 8 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

CHANGE AT BAKER STREET Sat 8 April, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

MIKEY SPICE + LUKIE D + DON CAMPBELL + CAROLENE THOMPSON Sun 9 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BLACK HONEY Sun 9 April, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE VERTIGO BAND Sun 9 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

VIGIL OF WAR + BLOOD STAINED REPUTATION Sun 9 April, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

Classical Music

BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR: RACHMANINOFF'S LITURGY OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM Featuring Paul Spicer (conductor), Sat 1 April, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

HALESOWEN CHORAL SOCIETY SPRING CONCERT Featuring Stephen Davis (conductor), Margaret Lingas, Anna Semple, Tim Burton & Paul Mcroft (soloists) & David Gregory (leader of the HCS Sinfonia). Programme comprises Handel's Samson, Sat 1 April, St. Margaret's Church, Hasbury, Halesowen

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CHORUS SPRING CONCERT Featuring Ben Lamb (conductor). Programme comprises Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle, Sat 1 April, Lichfield Cathedral

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CHOIR Featuring Ben Lamb (conductor) & Thomas Trotter (organ). Programme comprises Langlais' Messe Solennelle & Vaughan Williams' Five Mystical Songs, Mon 3 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SUDHA IN CONCERT Mon 3 April, Ludlow Methodist Church, South Shropshire

SHREWSBURY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SPRING CONCERT Wed 5 April, Alington Hall, Shrewsbury School

SUDHA IN CONCERT Thurs 6 April, Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton, South Shropshire

EX CATHEDRA: ST MATTHEW PASSION Featuring Jeffrey Skidmore (conductor). Programme comprises Bach's St Matthew Passion, Fri 7 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

MICKY FLANAGAN Thurs 30 March - Sat 1 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham



DARA O BRIAIN Thurs 30 March - Sat 1 April, Birmingham Hippodrome

HENRY ROLLINS Sat 1 April, Birmingham Town Hall

MICK FERRY, ELLIOT STEEL, SLIM & ALEXANDRA HADDOW Sat 1 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ASHLEY HESSON, TOJU, MR CEE, PETER FRANCIS, DANE BAPTISTE & LES BLAIR Sun 2 April, The Glee Club,

Birmingham

JOE WELLS Sun 2 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

GARY MEIKLE Sun 2 April, Old Rep, Birmingham

MARK STEEL Sun 2 April, Stourbridge Town Hall

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Wed 5 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

DAVE GORMAN Wed 5 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, JO ENRIGHT & PAUL THORNE Thurs 6 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MIKE GUNN, MATT BRAGG, ANTHONY AYTON & JON PEARSON Thurs 6 April, Lichfield Sports Club

LAUGH OUT LICHFIELD! Thurs 6 April, The Bowling Green, Lichfield

DARREN HARRIOTT Thurs 6 April, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

KUM-N-AVALOFF Thurs 6 April, Stourbridge Town Hall

JO ENRIGHT, PAUL THORNE, RADU ISAC, HARRY STACHINI & DANE BUCKLEY Fri 7 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

SOOZ KEMPNER Fri 7 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

ROBERT WHITE, DIANE FRITTON, HUSSAIN ALI & ROB COLEMAN Fri 7 April, Two Gates Club, Tamworth

JACK DEE, SOL BERNSTEIN, JACK GLEADOW & WAYNE BEESE Fri 7 April, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

JO ENRIGHT, PAUL THORNE, RADU ISAC & HARRY STACHINI Sat 8 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

JACK DEE, SOL BERNSTEIN, NINIA BENJAMIN & WAYNE BEESE Sat 8 April, Brierley Hill Civic, Dudley

DANA ALEXANDER, TOJU, PRINCE ABDI, SHABZ KARIEM & JUNIOR BOOKER Sun 9 April, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

RICHARD BLACKWOOD, KANE BROWN & DOUBLE TROUBLE Sun 9 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

Theatre

SUNSHINE ON LEITH Amateur version presented by Shrewsbury Musical Theatre Company, Thurs 30 March - Sat 1 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE MOUSETRAP Todd Carty & Gwyneth Strong star in Agatha Christie's bestselling classic, until Sat 1 April, Lichfield Garrick

PETER PAN Amateur version presented by Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre, until Sat 1 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

ROMEO & JULIE A love story 'with complications that exist not only in their hearts but also within their lifestyles and their infamy', until Sat 1



Abigail's Party

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wed 5 - Sat 15 April

Making its television debut as a BBC Play For Today in November 1977, Mike Leigh's *Abigail's Party* became an instant hit and catapulted Alison Steadman to stardom. A fascinating study of the pretensions of 1970s suburbia, the play focuses on the interaction between five ill-matched people during an evening characterised by alcohol, cigarettes, Demis Roussos records and cheesy nibbles. Steadman's portrayal of the monstrous Beverly was so definitive that it's since been hugely challenging for any actress to play the character in any other way. This London Classic Theatre version is out on tour following a successful run in the West End.

April, The Old Joint Stock, B'ham

BOUNCERS John Godber's classic comedy, set in a northern nightclub, until Sat 1 April, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW Special anniversary production of Richard O'Brien's legendary musical, until Sat 1 Apr, The Alexandra, B'ham

GREASE Amateur version presented by Stoke Youth Musical Theatre Company, until Sat 1 April, Stoke Repertory Theatre

THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL Comedy about taking risks, finding love and embracing second chances. Paul Nicholas, Belinda Lang, Tessa Peake-Jones and Graham Seed star, until Sat 1 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BAD GIRLS THE MUSICAL Amateur version presented by Tamworth Musical Theatre Company, until Sat 1 April, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

JULIUS CAESAR Directed by Atri Banerjee, until Sat 8 April, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

OF MICE & MEN Iqbal Khan puts 'a 2023 lens' on John Steinbeck's classic story of economic migration, racism, prejudice and enduring friendship, until Sat 8 April, The Rep, Birmingham

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Rebecca

Wheatley (Casualty), Mary Byrne (X Factor), Jessica Martin (Copycats) & West End favourite Susie Fenwick star in a 'funny and heartfelt look' at the 'joys' of menopause, Sat 1 April, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

HAMNET New play, based on Maggie O'Farrell's bestselling novel, which pulls back the curtain on the imagined life of the greatest writer in English history, Sat 1 April - Sat 17 June, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE MOUSETRAP Todd Carty & Gwyneth Strong star in Agatha Christie's bestselling classic, Mon 3 - Sat 8 April, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

ANNIE Craig Revel Horwood stars as Miss Hannigan in a 'glorious revival' of the much-loved musical, Mon 3 - Sat 15 April, The Alexandra, B'ham



THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO Christy Letteri's powerful and compassionate story of connection between family, friends and strangers... Tues 4 - Sat 8 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL JR
Amateur version presented by Coppice Performing Arts School, Wed 5 - Thurs 6 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

ABIGAIL'S PARTY London Classic Theatre present a new version of Mike Leigh's modern classic, Wed 5 - Sat 15 April, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

TOO MUCH WORLD AT ONCE A coming-of-age story exploring themes such as the climate crisis, identity, divorce, bullying and prejudice, Thurs 6 & Sat 8 April, The Rep, Birmingham

TRADE Unflinching contemporary play set within the European sex-trafficking industry, told through the eyes of a young woman as she attempts to find a place in a world she never asked to be part of, Fri 7 - Sun 9 April, The Old Joint Stock, Birmingham

Kids Theatre

DEMON DENTIST David Walliams' 'hilarious and thrilling story', live on stage, Thurs 30 March - Sun 2 April, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent



SHARK IN THE PARK See all three of Nick Sharratt's Shark In The Park books live on stage, Mon 3 April, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), B'ham

JURASSIC EARTH Interactive family show featuring animatronics and plenty of roarsome fun, Mon 3 April, Lichfield Garrick

THE JUNGLE BOOK Immersion Theatre fuse music, comedy and audience interaction in a stage adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's iconic tale, Tues 4 April, Stourbridge Town Hall

WILD BOOR IDEAS Puppets, song and a garden that grows before your very eyes feature in this fun interactive show for younger audiences, Tues 4 April, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE HUG Children's theatre in which music & puppetry combine in a tale of hope, empathy and acceptance, Thurs 6 April, The Hive, Shrewsbury

KING OF NOTHING Monstro Theatre present a new puppet musical inspired by The Emperor's New Clothes, Thurs 6 April, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

THE HUG Children's theatre in which music & puppetry combine in a tale of hope, empathy and acceptance, Sat 8 April, SpArC, Bishops Castle, South Shropshire

Dance

UGLY DUCKLING Northern Ballet present a choreographed retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale, Sat 1 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

UGLY DUCKLING Northern Ballet present a choreographed retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale, Sun 2 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

VINCENT SIMONE: TANGO PASSION Enjoy the dancing, tales and poetry connected to the Argentine Tango. Specialist dancer Paula Duarte stars as Vincent's leading lady, Sun 2 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

MOTIONHOUSE: STARCHITECTS Family production featuring gravity-defying choreography and digital projections, Wed 5 & Thurs 6 April, Lichfield Garrick

NADIYA & KAI: ONCE UPON A TIME Join the Strictly stars as they share their inspirations and aspirations, Tues 4 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GIOVANNI PERNICE: MADE IN ITALY Brand-new production featuring 'some of the best dancers and singers from the ballroom and theatre world', Sat 8 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Light Entertainment

WORD LOUNGE: RABBIT RABBIT Entertaining collection of sketches, stories and songs for April's Fool Day, Sat 1 April, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

WELSH MUSICAL THEATRE ORCHESTRA: BACK TO THE MUSICALS A time-travelling journey through some of the most popular musical theatre of all time. Maureen Nolan and West End stars Haydn Oakley, Samantha Thomas, Cameron Sharp & Lizzie Wofford feature, Sun 2 April, Lichfield Garrick

SING-A-LONG ENCANTO Sing your heart out while being taught dance moves and learning how to use your free interactive props bag, Wed 5 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

YIPPEE KI YAY Richard Marsh's acclaimed retelling of classic action film Die Hard, Wed 5 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE DREAMBOYS Presenting the No Strings Attached UK tour, Thurs 6 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

MATRICKS ILLUSION A family show

fusing fast-paced magic and illusion with dance and music, Fri 7 April, Lichfield Garrick

SING-A-LONG ENCANTO Sing your heart out while being taught dance moves and learning how to use your free interactive props bag, Sat 8 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HATERS ROAST: SHADY TOUR A drag comedy spectacular hosted by The Vivienne, winner of RuPaul's Drag Race UK Season One, Sun 9 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

HENRY ROLLINS: GOOD TO SEE YOU 2023 Join the American 'diatribist, confessor, provocateur, humorist and spoken-word artist' as he recounts the more recent events of his eventful life, Sat 1 April, Birmingham Town Hall

THREE ACRES AND A COW A history land rights and protest in folk song and story, Sun 2 April, Shrewsbury Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury Town Centre

AN EVENING WITH PRISCILLA PRESLEY The former wife of Elvis Presley chats to radio & TV presenter Edith Bowman about her illustrious career and her marriage to the King of Rock & Roll, Wed 5 April, Birmingham Town Hall

KATE MOSSE OBE: WARRIOR QUEENS & REVOLUTIONARIES Celebration of some of history's most extraordinary, brilliant, trailblazing and inspirational women, Mon 6 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

THE SERIAL KILLER NEXT DOOR Emma Kenny, one of the UK's most high-profile psychological therapists and crime commentators, discusses what creates a serial killer, Sat 8 April, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

Events

THE HUNT FOR THE GOLDEN EGG TRAIL Look for the Easter bunnies and chicks around the arboretum and follow their clues to find the hidden Easter eggs, until Sun 16 April, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

PEPPA PIG AT SEA LIFE Meet Peppa as she dives into a new adventure, making new friends with thousands of sea creatures, until Fri 2 June, National SEA LIFE Centre, B'ham

LEGO CITY Join the Lego City Minifigure team - Ricky Rocket Racer, Mech-Max, Go-To Gary and Fearless Fi - as they set epic missions for you to complete, until Sat 9 July, Legoland Discovery Centre, B'ham

THE MIDLANDS BREAKFAST CLUB Open

to all car enthusiasts, this is an opportunity to network and see some magnificent vehicles, Sat 1 April, British Ironworks Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

UK ULTIMATE PHYSIQUES: MIDLANDS CHAMPIONSHIPS Athletes go head-to-head to try and qualify for the 2023 UKUP British Finals, Sat 1 April, Old Rep, Birmingham

SAUSAGE AND CIDER FESTIVAL RACEDAY Presenting a variety of sausages and ciders from around the world, Sat 1 April, Uttoxeter Racecourse

SHROPSHIRE WAY 80K FESTIVAL Fundraiser for Grow Cook Learn with a choice of five routes, Sat 1 April, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND Gain access to rarely seen areas of the Severn Valley Railway, Sat 1 - Sun 2 April, Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

EASTER EVENINGS Check out the Easter farm trail, enjoy a storytelling session and help the farmers put the chicks to bed, Sat 1 - Sun 2 April, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA Follow the woodland trail to meet the Easter Bunny, and take part in activities such as super sand art, Easter shortbread decorating and magic shows, Sat 1 - Fri 14 April, National Forest Adventure Farm, Staffordshire

EASTER AT BECKETTS FARM A 'fun-filled' event where you will learn about the chick-hatching process - and if you're lucky, maybe see one hatching, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Becketts Farm, Birmingham

EASTER ADVENTURE QUEST Explore the grounds and gardens to hunt for clues and challenges, and discover traditional Easter games, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Stokesay Castle, Shropshire

NEW LIFE AT FORGE MILL FARM Explore the farm and meet all the newborns before going on an Easter egg hunt, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

PILOT TRAINING Join the pilot-training programme and find out if you'd have been up to the challenge of becoming an RAF pilot during the Second World War, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

EASTER HOLIDAY FAMILY ACTIVITIES Spring into life this Easter with seasonal family activities, walks and trails, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

EASTER EGG-VENTURE Receive your very own Easter passport to guide you through all the fun and games, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Lower Drayton Farm, Staffordshire

DRAGON EGG HUNT Help Ruby the Dragon find all her hidden eggs in the castle, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April,

Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS Discover some of the many ways that were used to welcome-in Spring, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

TRAIL: EASTER EGG BIRD HUNT Try to find the hidden nature-collection eggs around the museum, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

EASTER AT WEST MIDLAND SAFARI PARK The Easter Bunny is back to greet guests and help celebrate the park's 50th anniversary this year, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, West Midland Safari Park, Bewdley, Nr Kidderminster

EASTER STAGE SHOW Join Mr Cadbury's Parrot on his swashbuckling adventure to find the golden egg in this brand-new live show, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Cadbury World, Bourneville

LAMBING LIVE Experience lambing season at Trentham, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

FAIRY TALE EASTER An Alice in Wonderland Egg Hunt and a challenge to spot the unicorns and humpty dumpty around the farm, Sat 1 - Sun 16 April, Park Hall

Countryside Experience, Oswestry, North Shropshire

THOMAS LAND BIRTHDAY Enjoy a month of birthday celebrations with Thomas & Friends to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Europe's only Thomas Land, Sat 1 - Sun 30 April, Drayton Manor, Staffordshire

ANTIQUES AND A LITTLE BIT OF NONSENSE Tales from the sale room, TV and beyond in the company of four of the country's favourite television personalities from the world of antiques, Sun 2 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

FLYING EGGS! Attach a chocolate egg to a parachute and drop it from a height - the challenge is to create something it can safely land in, Sun 2 - Sun 16 April, Enginuity, Ironbridge

ECLECTIC ELECTRICS SCIENCE BUSKING Have fun with favourite gadgets and gizmos, all powered by electricity, Mon 3 - Fri 7 April, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

CHEMISTORIES - GOODNIGHT OPPI! Try out some family-friendly hands-on chemistry experiments, bringing to life the work of Opportunity, a robotic rover on the surface of Mars, Mon 3 - Fri 7 April, Thinktank Birmingham

Science Museum

EASTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITY - I SPY NATURE Journey through the meadows, making observations, before returning to create your own watercolours, Mon 3 - Fri 14 April, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

COSPLAY MANIA Arrive dressed as your favourite superhero and follow the new superhero sculpture trail, Wed 5 April, British Ironworks Centre, Oswestry, North Shropshire

2023 CAZOO PREMIER LEAGUE DARTS Featuring the biggest names in the sport, Thurs 6 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

NATURE EXPLORERS: BEE BRICK MAKING Explore Sarehole's grounds before making cob bricks to help the local bees survive, Thurs 6 April, Sarehole Mill, Birmingham

EASTER BONNET PARADE Children's activities, a Easter bonnet parade and a new Eggcellent trail, Thurs 6 April, British Ironworks Centre, Oswestry

THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY Tumble down the rabbit hole and discover the Mad Hatter's Tea Party on a steam train, Fri 7 - Mon 10 April,

Churnet Valley Railway, Staffordshire

INSOMNIA GAMING FESTIVAL Celebrating 'everything we love about video games and popular culture', Fri 7 - Mon 10 April, NEC, Birmingham

ALICE IN EASTER WONDERLAND Collect your goodie bag, take a themed boat trip and see if you can spot the hidden Easter eggs and win a prize, Fri 7 - Mon 10 April, Dudley Canal & Caverns

HOT GLASS TASTER SESSION: MAKE YOUR OWN EASTER EGG Work with molten glass at over 1,000° C to create an egg-shaped paperweight, Sat 8 April, Stourbridge Glass Museum

WESTON PARK MOTOR SHOW A day of motoring heritage that's ideal for enthusiasts, families and day-trippers, Sun 9 - Mon 10 April, Weston Park, Shropshire

BRITISH OPEN SQUASH 2023 One of the most prestigious and historic tournaments in professional squash, this year being held in Birmingham for the first time in over two decades, Sun 9 - Mon 10 April, Edgbaston Priory Club, Birmingham

WOLVERHAMPTON ARTS FEST 2023

5 - 7 MAY 2023

Art & craft sellers
Family entertainment
Competitions
Live performances
(dance, music, art demonstrations)
Treasure hunt
... and lots more

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GO YOUR OWN WAY FLEETWOOD MAC LEGACY

Friday 23 June - 7.30pm



NOW BOOKING

LIVE AT THE TOWN HALL

COMEDY NIGHT STARRING JACK DEE, SOL BERNSTEIN,
JACK GLEADOW AND WAYNE BEESE (MC)

Friday 7 April (8pm)

THE SERIAL KILLER NEXT DOOR WITH EMMA KENNY

Saturday 8 April (7.30pm)

A NIGHT IN KILKENNY - STARRING THE KILKENNYS

Saturday 15 April (7.30pm)

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO

STARRING SO DAVA FROM ITV'S THE VOICE

Friday 28 & Saturday 29 April (7.30pm)

THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY

Sunday 30 April (7.30pm)

D-DAY DARLINGS

Friday 5 May (7.30pm)

ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD

ORCHESTRA SPRING CONCERT

Saturday 20 May (7.30pm)

LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL

A SUTTON COLDFIELD MUSICAL YOUTH THEATRE PRODUCTION

Tuesday 23 to Saturday 27 May

(7.30pm & 2.30pm Sat matinee)

SUPERSTAR WRESTLING

Monday 29 May (7pm)

MADE IN TENNESSEE

SOME OF UK'S FINEST COUNTRY MUSICIANS PERFORM

THE SOUNDTRACK OF AMERICAN COUNTRY

Friday 2 June (7.30pm)

THE DUBLINERS EXPERIENCE

LIVE IN CONCERT

Saturday 3 June (7.30pm)

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

A TRINITY PLAYERS PRODUCTION

Tuesday 6 - Saturday 10 June

(7.30pm, 2.30pm Sat matinee)

GARY DELANEY: GARY IN

PUNDERLAND

Saturday 24 June (8pm)



SUNDAY 11TH JUNE

WOLVERHAMPTON RACECOURSE

3 STAGES	MEET & GREETs
TOTS FAIRGROUND	BUBBLES
BOUNCELAND	CREATION ZONE
CRAZY GOLF	STORY TELLING
DINOSAURS	RAINBOW PARADE
SUPER PIRATES	HAPPYLAND
BABY RAVE	WATER PLAY



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MIKA / Laura Mvula / Will Young / Fergus McCreadie
Laura Jurd / Rodrigo y Gabriela / Jake Bugg
Rufus Wainwright / Georgia Cécile / Connor Selby
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SK Shlomo's Beatbox Adventure for Kids / Skylla
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JAZZ



The Damned - Birmingham Town Hall

Gigs

CAITY BASER Mon 10 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MODERN COLOR Mon 10 April, The Asylum, Birmingham

DMA'S Mon 10 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

MACKLEMORE + TONES AND I + CHARLIEONNAFRIDAY Tues 11 April, O2 Academy, B'ham

RYAN ADAMS Tues 11 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Wed 12 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GARRY AND ROBBIE - TRIBUTE Wed 12 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

PAUL YOUNG Wed 12 April, Telford Theatre

LA DISPUTE + POOL KIDS + OCEANATOR Thurs 13 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LIMP BIZKIT + WARGASM + BLACKGOLD Thurs 13 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THE DAMNED Thurs 13 April, Birmingham Town Hall

DERMOT KENNEDY + NOAH KAHAN Thurs 13 April, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

GUN Thurs 13 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

NEARLY ELTON Thurs 13 April, Lichfield Garrick

ED GAUDEN JAZZ QUARTET Thurs 13 April, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

MA BESSIE & THE PIG FOOT BAND Thurs 13 April, All Stretton Village Hall, South Shropshire

THE LAST INTERNATIONALE + TAIPEI HOUSTON Fri 14 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

THE HARA + SNAYX + CALLMEAMOUR Fri 14 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

RAZORLIGHT Fri 14 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

THEN JERICO Fri 14 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

FISHERMANS FRIENDS Fri 14 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

PAUL SIMON'S 'GRACELAND' REIMAGINED BY THE LONDON AFRICAN GOSPEL CHOIR Fri 14 April, Birmingham Town Hall

ADELE BY CHLOE BARRY Fri 14 April, Dudley Town Hall

CLOUDBUSTING - THE MUSIC OF KATE BUSH Fri 14 April, The Robin, Bilston

WEDNESDAY 13 + SOUTH OF SALEM + SICK N' BEAUTIFUL + TARAH WHO? Fri 14 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS PIGS + JUDY BRUSH Fri 14 April, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ELO ENCOUNTER Fri 14 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MOD N JAM Fri 14 April, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THE SIGNATURES - NORTHERN SOUL LIVE Fri 14 April, Lichfield Garrick

SUNBIRDS - DAVE HEMINGWAY Fri 14 April, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

SHOP FRONT HEROES + BAXTER BUMSTEAD + VINCENT WHYTE Fri 14 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE JAMES OLIVER BAND + SUPPORT Fri 14 April, The Priest Weston, Chirbury, Shropshire

ENDORPHINMACHINE Sat 15 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

BEN PORTSMOUTH: THIS IS ELVIS Sat 15 April, Birmingham Town Hall

THE KILKENNYS Sat 15 April, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

PAUL YOUNG Sat 15 April, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

ENTER SHIKARI + HIGHER POWER + TOKKY HORROR Sat 15 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

OCTOBER DRIFT Sat 15 April, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

LOADED REVOLVER Sat 15 April, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

TONY CHRISTIE & RANAGRI Sat 15 April, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE DRIFTERS Sat 15 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

R&B LOVERS FESTIVAL Sat 15 April, The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury

GOAT Sun 16 April, The Mill, Digbeth, Birmingham

Classical Music

CBSO PLAYS RACHMANINOFF'S SECOND PIANO CONCERTO Featuring François Leleux (conductor) & Behzod Abduraimov (piano). Programme includes works by Brahms & Rachmaninoff, Thurs 13 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

LUDLOW SONG WEEKEND OPENING CONCERT Featuring Carolyn Sampson (soprano), James Atkinson (baritone), Iain Burnside (piano) & Michael Foyle (violin). Programme includes works by Britten, Poulenc, Fauré, Quilter, Duparc, Debussy & more... Fri 14 April, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

CELEBRITY SONG RECITAL WITH RODERICK WILLIAMS & SUSIE ALLAN Programme includes works by Schumann, Mendelssohn, Josephine Lang & Brahms, Fri 14 April, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

ANDRE RIEU Sat 15 April, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

MORNING RECITAL: THE VOICE OF DESIRE Featuring Siân Dicker (soprano), Kieran Raynar (baritone) & Krystal Tunnicliffe (piano). Programme includes works by Finzi, Judith Weir & Edward Rushton, Sat 15 April, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

CBSO: FINAL SYMPHONY - MUSIC FROM FINAL FANTASY Featuring Ben Parry (conductor) & Mischa Cheung (piano), Sun 16 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CAPTAIN STRATTON'S FANCY Featuring Brindley Sherratt (bass), Iain Burnside (piano), Rebecca Leggett (mezzo) & Krystal Tunnicliffe (piano). Programme includes works by Ireland, Finzi, Britten, Delius, Vaughan Williams & Quilter, Sun 16 April, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

Comedy

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Wed 12 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, NATHAN CATON & COMIC TBC Thurs 13 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NICK MOHAMMED Thurs 13 April, Old Rep, Birmingham

AXEL BLAKE Fri 14 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



PAUL TONKINSON, RICH WILSON, NINA GILLIGAN & WAYNE BEESE Fri 14 April, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

NICK DOODY, PETER BRUSH, SILKY & ADA CAMPE Fri 14 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

ALASDAIR BECKETT-KING Fri 14 - Sat 15 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NATHAN CATON, PAUL MCCAFFREY, ABI CLARKE & COMIC TBC Fri 14 - Sat 15 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

NINA GILLIGAN, ALEX HYLTON, PETE OTWAY & COMIC TBC Sat 15 April, Rosies Nightclub, Birmingham

LUCY PORTER Sat 15 April, Old Rep, Birmingham

LUISA OMIELAN Sat 15 April, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge



SIMON BRODKIN Sun 16 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

CHICAGO: TEEN EDITION Amateur version presented by Get Your Wigle On teen group, Mon 10 - Wed 12 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MACBETH The Garrick Young Rep present an amateur version of Shakespeare's tale of power, greed and the supernatural, Mon 10, Wed 12, Fri 14 & Sat 15 April, Lichfield Garrick

THE SPONGEBOB MUSICAL Popular Nickleodeon animated television star SpongeBob SquarePants takes centre stage in a production that's being described as 'an all-singing, all-dancing, deep-sea pearl of a show'. Gareth Gates and Divina de Campo star, Tues 11 - Sat 15 April, Birmingham Hippodrome

ROMEO & JULIET The Garrick Young Rep present an amateur version of the most romantic love story ever told, Tues 11, Thurs 13, Sat 15 & Sun 16 April, Lichfield Garrick

HEATHERS THE MUSICAL Black comedy based on the cult 1989 movie starring Winona Ryder and Christian Slater, Tues 11 - Sat 15 April, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

AVENUE Q Little Theatre Company present the award-winning musical, complete with puppets, (some nudity) and adult humour, Tues 11 - Sat 15 April, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Rebecca

thelist

Wheatley (Casualty), Mary Byrne (X Factor), Jessica Martin (Copycats) & West End favourite Susie Fenwick star in a 'funny and heartfelt look' at the 'joys' of menopause, Thurs 13 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

THE ENDLING Strange Futures Theatre Company use 'powerful physicality' in a discussion about our impact and responsibility as humans... Thurs 13 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

P*SSSED UP PANTO: ALADDIN Special one-off performance - not for the fainthearted, Thurs 13 - Fri 14 April, Telford Theatre

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY Hotbuckle Theatre fuse live music and humour in a retelling of the Jane Austen classic, Fri 14 April, Alveley Parish Memorial Hall, South Shropshire

ALADDIN Easter pantomime starring Jamie Jones as Widow Twankey and Lee Redwood as Wishee Washee, Fri 14 April, Telford Theatre

5 YEARS New comedy-drama exploring what we're prepared to trade in pursuit of the perfect body, Fri 14 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

OUR GIRLS, OUR GAME A new musical about a women's football team and

what women can achieve when they work together and refuse to limit their expectations, even in the face of classism, sexism and bigotry, Fri 14 - Sat 15 April, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome



SHAMLET Presented by Pride And Joy Theatre, Fri 14 - Sat 15 April, Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

TUESDAY Alison Carr's play contemplates themes including friendship, sibling love, family, identity, grief, bullying, loneliness and responsibility - and there's also a little bit of sci-fi, just for good measure... Fri 14 - Sat 15 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SHREK JR Amateur version presented by Get Your Wiggle On, Fri 14 - Sun 16 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LA BOHEME Ellen Kent Opera present

Puccini's classic tale of Parisian love and loss. Sung in Italian with English surtitles, Sat 15 April, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

BLUE BADGE BUNCH A gameshow in which each game represents a different disability, giving kids and grown-ups the chance to learn about autism and cerebral palsy... Sat 15 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Kids Theatre

HEY DUGGEE THE LIVE THEATRE SHOW Interactive family show bursting with music, puppetry and laughs aplenty, Mon 10 - Wed 12 April, Birmingham Town Hall

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS Lost The Plot Theatrical present an interactive show for younger audiences, Tues 11 April, Telford Theatre

THE LITTLE MERMAID Scott Ritchie Productions present a brand-new version of a classic and much-loved story, Wed 12 April, Lichfield Garrick

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE Children's show featuring live music, puppetry, laughter and audience participation, Thurs 13 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE LITTLE MERMAID Scott Ritchie Productions present a brand-new version of a classic and much-loved story, Thurs 13 April, Stourbridge Town Hall

FIREMAN SAM LIVE! Join Sam, Penny, Elvis, Station Officer Steele and Norman in an all-singing and dancing action-packed show, Thurs 13 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

MOG THE FORGETFUL CAT First ever stage adaptation of Judith Kerr's bestselling Mog picture books, Thurs 13 - Sat 15 April, The Rep, Birmingham

THE JUNGLE BOOK Immersion Theatre fuse music, comedy and audience interaction in a musical adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's iconic tale, Fri 14 April, Old Rep, Birmingham

FIREMAN SAM LIVE! Join Sam, Penny, Elvis, Station Officer Steele and Norman in an all-singing and dancing action-packed show, Fri 14 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

RAPUNZEL Join Wally, Dame Dolly and Fairy Tale in an Easter panto adventure for all the family, Fri 14 April, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS

GODIVA
FESTIVAL | 30 JUN - 2 JUL
2023

WAR MEMORIAL PARK
COVENTRY

DAY
TICKETS
from £8

WEEKEND
TICKETS
from £25



The Enemy

RUDIMENTAL DJ

MELANIE C

PLUS MANY MORE ACTS

www.godivafestival.com

Pantomime-style entertainment featuring circus and speciality acts, colourful sets and a post-show meet & greet, Sun 16 April, Old Rep, Birmingham

POP PRINCESSES Children's pop concert in which four fairytale princesses sing chart-topping hits from the likes of Little Mix, Taylor Swift, Ariana Grande and more... Sun 16 April, Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

THE JUNGLE BOOK Immersion Theatre fuse music, comedy and audience interaction in a musical adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's iconic tale, Sun 16 April, Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Dance

NADIYA & KAI: ONCE UPON A TIME Join the Strictly stars as they share their inspirations and aspirations, Thurs 13 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Light Entertainment

DREAMCOAT STARS Featuring hits from the West End and Broadway, Wed 12 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

KOKE DA LASHKARA VAISAKHI MELA Bringing Punjab to the UK with traditional dancers and artists, to celebrate Vaisakhi, Sat 15 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE Evening of laughter, cabaret, mystery & glamour, Sat 15 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

Events

THE HUNT FOR THE GOLDEN EGG TRAIL Look for the Easter bunnies and chicks around the arboretum and follow their clues to find the hidden Easter eggs, until Sun 16 April, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

PEPPA PIG AT SEA LIFE Meet Peppa as she dives into a new adventure, making new friends with thousands of sea creatures, until Fri 2 June, National SEA LIFE Centre, B'ham

LEGO CITY Join the Lego City Minifigure team - Ricky Rocket Racer, Mech-Max, Go-To Gary and Fearless Fi - as they set epic missions for you to complete, until Sat 9 July, Legoland Discovery Centre, B'ham

ASTER FAMILY FUN DAY Free activities and free entry for kids, Mon 10 April, Wolverhampton Racecourse

EASTER FUN AT HADEN HILL HOUSE Easter crafts and trails, family entertainment and games, Mon 10 April, Haden Hill House Museum and Park, Cradley Heath

ECLECTIC ELECTRICS SCIENCE BUSKING Have fun with favourite gadgets and gizmos, all powered by electricity, Mon 10 - Fri 14 April, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

CHEMISTORIES - GOODNIGHT OPPY! Try out family-friendly hands-on chemistry experiments, bringing to life the work of Opportunity, a robotic rover on the surface of Mars, Mon 10 - Fri 14 April, Thinktank Birmingham Science Museum

MEGASLAM WRESTLING 2023 LIVE TOUR Team Megaslam take on Team Nasty in a series of high-energy matches, Tues 11 April, Lichfield Garrick Theatre

A DISCOVERY SPRING CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY CLUB Enjoy the meadows, explore nature and collect natural materials to use in crafts, Tues 11 April, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

TILE DECORATING WORKSHOPS Learn and apply the traditional technique of tube-lining as you decorate your very own ceramic tile, Tues 11 - Fri 14 April, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge

BRITISH OPEN SQUASH 2023 One of the most prestigious and historic tournaments in professional squash, this year being held in Birmingham for the first time in over two decades, Tues 11 - Sun 16 April, The Rep, Birmingham

EASTER EVENINGS Check out the Easter farm trail, enjoy a storytelling session and help the farmers put the put the chicks to bed, Fri 14 - Sat 15 April, Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich

SPRING STEAM GALA Three-day intensively timetabled extravaganza featuring guest trains alongside the Valley's resident steam fleet, Fri 14 - Sun 16 April, Severn Valley Railway, Nr Kidderminster

A TASTE OF HANDSWORTH WALKING TOUR From Georgian treats to Ethiopian coffee, tickle your tastebuds and learn about Handsworth's fascinating food history, Sat 15 April, Soho House, Birmingham

SHREWSBURY STEAMPUNK SPECTACULAR Day of entertainment featuring a market and plenty of Steampunk, Sat 15 April, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

THE MOTIVATIONAL EXPERIENCE Mr Motivator hosts a day of activities aimed at providing participants with an improved sense of wellbeing, Sat 15 April, Telford Theatre

HOT GLASS TASTER SESSION: MAKE YOUR OWN EASTER EGG Work with molten glass at over 1,000°C to create an egg-shaped paperweight, Sat 15 April, Stourbridge Glass Museum



Hey Duggee The Live Theatre Show - Birmingham Town Hall

EASTER DOGGY FAIR New event featuring fun competitions, stalls, speakers, dog walks and more, Sat 15 April, Sandwell Valley Showground, West Bromwich

INTERNATIONAL LIVING HISTORY Experience the best in living history, from the Bronze Age to the Cold War, Sat 15 - Sun 16 April, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove

HOT WHEELS MONSTER TRUCKS LIVE GLOW PARTY Featuring monster trucks, a dance party, laser shows

and toy giveaways, Sat 15 - Sun 16 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

TOY COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring more than 500 stalls packed with thousands of collectables for sale, Sun 16 April, NEC, Birmingham

LINO CUT PRINT MAKING WORKSHOP Taking as inspiration the beautiful floral-decorated cameo glass in the museum's collection, create your own unique lino cut prints, Sun 16 April, Stourbridge Glass Museum

MUSIC FOR TEAM CLEO
PERFORMED BY MEMBERS OF 'SOUNDS INTERESTING'

TWO NEW WORKS BY
JOHN CHARLES HYSLOP

NEOLITHIC SUITE FOR THREE VIOLAS
STRING QUARTET NO.3

FRIDAY 14TH APRIL AT 1PM SHREWSBURY ABBEY,
SHROPSHIRE

FRIDAY 21ST APRIL AT 1PM ST ANDREW'S CHURCH,
PRESTEIGNE

Members of 'Sounds Interesting' are thrilled to bring two new works by John Charles Hyslop to Shrewsbury & Presteigne. All the proceeds will benefit the Team Cleo Fund, a registered supporter group for The Brain Tumour Charity #TeamCleo

Free entry; donations welcomed.
<https://soundsinteresting> @team_cleo_fund
stringquartet.co.uk

SHREWSBURY

FOLK
FESTIVAL

First line up
announcement

25-26-27-28 AUG 2023

Artists

✿ Billy Bragg ✿ Oysterband
✿ Breabach ✿ Jiggy
✿ Spiers & Boden
✿ Talisk ✿ Daphne's Flight
✿ N'Faly Kouyaté

✿ Maddy Prior & Forgotten Lands ✿ Leveret
✿ N'famady Kouyaté ✿ The Salts
✿ The Bar-Steward Sons of Val Doonican
✿ Dana Immanuel & The Stolen Band
✿ And many more headliners to come!

Dance Bands

✿ Lasair ✿ Leveret 10th Anniversary Ceilidh
✿ Melrose Ceilidh Band ✿ Old Spot
✿ Oscina ✿ Peeping Tom
✿ Topette!! ✿ Whapweasel

P@ndemonium!
Children's Festival

refolcus
Youth Festival

- ♥ Ceilidhs
- ♥ Morris & Dance Teams
- ♥ Workshops
- ♥ Singarounds & Sessions
- ♥ Craft Fair
- ♥ Food Village
- ♥ Camping & Glamping
- ♥ Real Ale, Wine & Cocktail Bars

Day & Weekend Tickets

shrewsburyfolkfestival.co.uk





Cardinal Black - KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

Gigs

J.I.D + EARTHGANG Mon 17 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

MIMI WEBB + BLAKE ROSE + HENRY MOODIE Tues 18 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

KNIGHT AND SPIERS Wed 19 April, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

CARA DILLON Wed 19 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

YES PLEASE - YES TRIBUTE Thurs 20 April, The Robin, Bilston

CARDINAL BLACK Thurs 20 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

JASMINE MYRA Thurs 20 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

SCOTT BRADLEE Thurs 20 April, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE BLACKHEART ORCHESTRA Thurs 20 April, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

THE CHRISTIANS Thurs 20 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

LIMEHOUSE LIZZY Thurs 20 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

MONICA AND THE EXPUSION + THE NEW SUBTERRANEANS Thurs 20 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE STORY OF THE DUBLINERS Thurs 20 - Fri 21 April, Lichfield Garrick

TOBY SEBASTIAN Fri 21 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RIVERSIDE ID. Fri 21 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

MASSIVE WAGONS +

THE VIRGINMARS Fri 21 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

CHE LINGO + LOUIS CULTURE Fri 21 April, O2 Academy, B'ham

THE INTERPRETERS Fri 21 April, The Rhodehouse, Sutton Coldfield

CHICAGO BLUES BROS Fri 21 April, Dudley Town Hall

PINK BY VICKY JACKSON Fri 21 April, The Robin, Bilston

HELLBENT FOREVER + BORN TO BE BAD - JUDAS PRIEST + JOAN JETT TRIBUTES Fri 21 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MIK ARTISTIK'S EGO TRIP + NICK DEGG Fri 21 April, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

BAD MANNERS Fri 21 April, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

PAUL YOUNG Fri 21 April, The Prince Of Wales Theatre, Cannock

SYNTH Fri 21 April, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

T'PAU Fri 21 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

HEAD HONCHOS Fri 21 April, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

BLACK BEAR KISS + WOUNDED SPIRIT Fri 21 April, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

TOM MEIGHAN + THE WHITE LAKES Sat 22 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

PARAMORE + BLOC PARTY Sat 22 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

BOWIE EXPERIENCE Sat

22 April, The Alexandra, B'ham

SWEDE DREAMZ - ABBA TRIBUTE Sat 22 April, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

FLASH - QUEEN TRIBUTE Sat 22 April, The Robin, Bilston

EMPYRE Sat 22 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

STILLMARILLION Sat 22 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

THE ELO EXPERIENCE Sat 22 April, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

INTO THE SHADOWS Sat 22 April, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

URBAN FOLK QUARTET Sat 22 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

FIVE O'CLOCK HERO Sat 22 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

42 CROWNS Sat 22 April, Hermon Arts, Oswestry, North Shropshire

DAOIRÍ FARRELL Sat 22 April, The Talbot Theatre, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

GUN Sun 23 April, The Robin, Bilston

SPACE ELEVATOR Sun 23 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

MIKE AND THE MECHANICS Sun 23 April, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

THE KING'S VOICE - GORDON HENDRICKS Sun 23 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

GUTTERSNIPE Sun 23 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER Programme includes works by Mozart, C Frances-Hoad, Whitlock, S Karg-Elert & Holst, Mon 17 April, Birmingham Town Hall

CBSO PLAYS BEETHOVEN'S PASTORAL SYMPHONY Featuring Julian Rachlin (conductor/violin) & Sarah McElravy (viola). Programme includes works by Rossini, Mozart, Beethoven, Wed 19 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

SIMON & SAOKO BLENDIS IN CONCERT Wed 19 April, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Ludlow, South Shropshire

JARUALDA QUARTET Programme includes works by Sibelius, Wolf, Haydn & Dvorak, Thurs 20 April, Gateway Arts Centre, Shrewsbury

ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Featuring Eva Ollikainen (conductor) & Sir Stephen Hough (piano). Programme includes Anna Thorvaldsdottir's Metacosmos, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3 & Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 5, Fri 21 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

ANTHONY PINEL ORGAN RECITAL Fri 21 April, Wrekin College Chapel, Wellington, Shropshire

CBSO: FOUR SEASONS Featuring Eugene Tzinkindelean (violin/director). Programme includes works by Schubert, Vivaldi & Piazzolla (arr. Desyatnikov), Sat 22 April, Birmingham Town Hall

SHREWSBURY CANTATA CHOIR Featuring Anthony Coupe (conductor) & Gemma King (soprano). Programme includes Requiems by Maurice Duruflé & Gabriel Fauré, Sat 22 April, United Reformed Church (URC), Shrewsbury

ECHO RISING STARS Featuring James Newby (baritone) & Joseph Middleton (piano). Programme comprises Schubert's Die schöne Müllerin, Sun 23 April, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

FUNDRAISING CONCERT Featuring Eleanor Alberga and Tom Bowes (violin). Programme includes works by Elgar, Alberga, Paganani, De Falla & Syzmanowski, Sun 23 April, St Laurence's Church, Ludlow, South Shropshire

Comedy

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Wed 19 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, PAUL TOMKINSON & BILLY KIRKWOOD Thurs 20 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

COMEDY AT CASA Thurs 20 April, Casa,

Stafford

PAUL TOMKINSON, BILLY KIRKWOOD, LAUREN PATTISON & DANIEL FOXF Fri 21 - Sat 22 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PETER KAY Fri 21 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

RICH HALL Fri 21 April, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

SIMON EVANS Fri 21 April, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

AXEL BLAKE Sat 22 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

GARY MEIKLE Sat 22 April, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

HANNAH BYCZKOWSKI Sat 22 April, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

JOE PASQUALE, HAYLEY ELLIS, NIPPER THOMAS & WAYNE BEESE Sat 22 April, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

BARBARA NICE AND LINDSEY SANTORO & COMICS TBC Sun 23 April, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

KEVIN HART Mon 24 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

Theatre

PRIDE & PREJUDICE* (*SORT OF) Award-winning retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story, Mon 17 - Sat 22 April, The Rep, B'ham

TITANIC THE MUSICAL Thom Sutherland's acclaimed production is based on real people aboard the most legendary ship in the world... Tues 18 - Sat 22 April, Birmingham Hippodrome

ELLEN KENT'S AIDA Ellen Kent Opera present Verdi's tragic story of war, jealousy and revenge, Wed 19 April, The Alexandra, Birmingham

MADAMA BUTTERFLY Ellen Kent Opera present Puccini's heart-breaking story of the beautiful young Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval lieutenant - with dramatic results, Thurs 20 April, The Alexandra, Birmingham

NORMAL Tom Stevenson's one-act LGBT comedy concerning family, friends, love, sex and work, Thurs 20 - Fri 21 April, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

TREASURE ISLAND Stourbridge Theatre Company present an amateur version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic story, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 April, Stourbridge Town Hall

9 TO 5 THE MUSICAL TADLOP present an amateur version of the Dolly Parton musical, Thurs 20 - Sat 22 April, Telford Theatre

TEECHERS (LEAVERS '22) John Godber's comedy about education for the 'haves' and 'have nots', Thurs 20 - Sat 22 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

FANCY GETTING YOUR COPY OF WHAT'S ON DELIVERED DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR EVERY MONTH?

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AND CONTACT US ON EITHER OF THE BELOW:

WHAT'S ON SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE - 01743 281714 OR EMAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS@WHATSONLIVE.CO.UK

MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL 2 Rebecca Wheatley (Casualty), Mary Byrne (X Factor), Jessica Martin (Copycats) & West End favourite Susie Fenwick star in a 'funny and heartfelt look' at the 'joys' of menopause, Fri 21 April, The Alexandra, Birmingham

A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN One-woman show in which Rebecca Vaughan performs Virginia Woolf's 1928 exploration of the impact of poverty and sexual inequality on intellectual freedom and creativity, Fri 21 April, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE Told By An Idiot presents a new staging of Frank Marcus' 1960s cult classic, Fri 21 April - Sat 13 May, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

24, 23, 22 BY DOUG DEANS A gig-theatre show about the heat of the moment, and how our impulses create ripples which become waves, Sat 22 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

CYMBELINE Gregory Doran directs the Bard's 'rare late romance' in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's First Folio, Sat 22 April - Sat 27 May, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Kids Theatre

VINLAND A Viking storytelling adventure for audience members aged eight and older... Fri 21 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

TOP SECRET: THE MAGIC OF SCIENCE An 'entertaining educational family show' - perfect for budding magicians and scientists, Sat 22 April, Tamworth Assembly Rooms

Dance

PROPEL DANCE: THE SNOW QUEEN The UK's first all-wheelchair dance company present a reimagined version of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale, Sun 23 April, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham

Light Entertainment

TRACY BORMAN - HOW TO BE A GOOD MONARCH An 'entertaining and informative' audio-visual tour of 1,000 years of twists and turns in the story of the British monarchy - from William the Conqueror to Charles III, Mon 17 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE UK SERIES 4 TOUR An evening with Baby, Black Peppa, Cheddar Gorgeous, Copper Top, Dakota Schiffer, Danny Beard,

Jonbers Blonde, Just May, Le Fil, Pixie Polite, Sminty Drop and Starlet, Tues 18 April, Symphony Hall, B'ham

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL WORLD TOUR Brand-new collection of short films from the world's most prestigious mountain film festival, Tues 18 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

THE MUSIC AND LAUGHTER SHOW Nostalgic show featuring comedy and song. Steve Ashcroft & Martin Lewis star, Wed 19 April, The Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

TRACY BORMAN - HOW TO BE A GOOD MONARCH An 'entertaining and informative' audio-visual tour of 1,000 years of twists and turns in the story of the British monarchy - from William the Conqueror to Charles III, Wed 19 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

DUNGEONS AND DRAG KINGS: DRAG FROM THE DEPTHS A fusion of comedy, singing and dancing in a nautical-themed drag extravaganza, Fri 21 April, The Hive, Shrewsbury

BINGO AT TIFFANY'S Join character comedian Tracey Collins (Tina Turner Tea Lady) as she hosts an evening of bingo games, singalongs and glamorous dancing, Sat 22 April, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

TRÉS TRÉS CABARET The promise of a silly and saucy night to remember, Sat 22 April, The Hub@St Marys, Lichfield

BEYOND THE BARRICADE Musical theatre concert featuring principal performers from Les Misérables, Sat 22 April, The Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

AN EVENING OF BURLESQUE Evening of laughter, cabaret, mystery & glamour, Sun 23 April, Lichfield Garrick

THAT'LL BE THE DAY Nostalgic show combining comedy sketches, impersonations and a plethora of musical hits from the 1950s through to the 1980s, Sun 23 April, The Alexandra, Birmingham

Talks & Spoken Word

AN EVENING WITH BOB ODENKIRK Join Emmy-winning writer and Golden Globe-nominated actor, comedian & director Bob Odenkirk as he recounts the twists and turns of his comedy career, Mon 17 April, The Alexandra, Birmingham

TEST MATCH SPECIAL LIVE: THE ASHES Join Jonathan 'Aggers' Agnew and Australia bowling legend Glenn McGrath for an evening of stories, memories, and predictions ahead of a massive Ashes summer, Tues 18 April, Birmingham Town Hall

FRAN LEBOWITZ The cultural satirist and author shares her cutting-edge



A Room Of One's Own - Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

take on anything and everything, alongside her 'pet peeves' - including celebrity culture, tourists and baby strollers... Thurs 20 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Events

THE HUNT FOR THE GOLDEN EGG TRAIL Look for the Easter bunnies and chicks around the arboretum and follow their clues to find the hidden Easter eggs, until Sun 16 April, Bodenham Arboretum, Kidderminster

PEPPA PIG AT SEA LIFE Meet Peppa as she dives into a new adventure, making new friends with thousands of sea creatures, until Fri 2 June, National SEA LIFE Centre, B'ham

LEGO CITY Join the Lego City Minifigure team - Ricky Rocket Racer, Mech-Max, Go-To Gary and Fearless Fi - as they set epic missions for you to complete, until Sat 9 July, Legoland Discovery Centre, B'ham

FESTIVAL OF THRILLS Celebrating the park's line-up of rollercoasters, in particular The Smiler as it enters its 10th year, Mon 17 April - Sun 7 May, Alton Towers, Staffordshire

WILD ESCAPE FOR EARTH DAY Drop-in activities celebrating Earth Day, Sat

22 April, Weoley Castle, Birmingham

ST GEORGE'S DAY EXTRAVAGANZA Medieval-themed fun, including jousting, archery, a living-history camp, stalls, fairground rides and children's activities, Sat 22 April, Tamworth Castle Grounds

STAFFORDSHIRE NATURE DAY & INKA THE POLAR BEAR Celebrate World Earth Day, meet local nature experts and enjoy crafts, activities and displays, Sat 22 April, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

EASTER STAGE SHOW Join Mr Cadbury's Parrot on his swashbuckling adventure to find the golden egg in this brand-new live show, Sat 22 - Sun 23 April, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

UKTTA TATTOO CONVENTION Featuring some of the UK's top tattoo artists, Sat 22 - Sun 23 April, NEC, Birmingham

ST GEORGE'S DAY Celebrate the special day with themed activities in the 11th-century castle courtyard, Sat 22 - Sun 23 April, Dudley Zoo & Castle

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTORS FAIR Featuring traders from across the UK selling a wide range of items from yesteryear, Sun 23 April, Himley Hall, Dudley



Easter Stage Show - Cadbury World, Birmingham



Billy Nomates - O2 Institute, Birmingham

Gigs

BILLY OCEAN Mon 24 April, Birmingham Town Hall

BILLY NOMATES Tues 25 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

LYRA Tues 25 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

SAM SMITH + CAT BURNS Tues 25 April, Resorts World Arena, Birmingham

COMBICHRIST + PRIEST Tues 25 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

PROFESSOR GREEN Wed 26 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

CLODBUSTING: THE KATE BUSH SONGBOOK Wed 26 April, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

DEAN FRIEDMAN Wed 26 April, St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury

KATHRYN ROBERTS AND SEAN LAKEMAN Thurs 27 April, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY Thurs 27 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COSMIC KITTEN + THE SUNSET LIMITED Thurs 27 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

MONEY FOR NOTHING Thurs 27 April, Telford Theatre

DEEPER PURPLE Fri 28 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

RARE AMERICANS Fri 28 April, O2 Institute, Birmingham

AGNIESZKA CHYLIŃSKA

Fri 28 April, O2 Academy, Birmingham

NOORAN SISTERS Fri 28 April, Birmingham Town Hall

BAD BOYS OF COUNTRY Fri 28 April, Dudley Town Hall

COLDPLACE - COLDPLAY TRIBUTE Fri 28 April, The Robin, Bilston

THE JACK FLETCHER BAND Fri 28 April, Newhampton Arts Centre,

MOTORHEADACHE + BANG BANG FIRECRACKER Fri 28 April, Eleven, Stoke-on-Trent

THE MUSIC OF LIONEL RICHIE Fri 28 April, Lichfield Garrick

ALEX OHM Fri 28 April, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

MONEY FOR NOTHING - DIRE STRAITS TRIBUTE Fri 28 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

ORANGE RIVER REMEDY + COLLIDER SKIES + SI ALTON Fri 28 April, Albert's Shed, Shrewsbury

THE BOOTLEG SHADOWS Fri 28 April, Telford Theatre

DON'T FEED THE GOAT + VERSAINTS Fri 28 April, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

PHOENIX LAKE + DAM.G + WARLOCK A.D. Fri 28 April, Percy's Cafe Bar, Whitchurch, North Shropshire

RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC Fri 28 - Sat 29 April, Theatre

Severn, Shrewsbury
POSTMODERN JUKEBOX Sat 29 April, Birmingham Town Hall

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO Sat 29 April, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

THE DRIFTERS Sat 29 April, Walsall Arena & Arts Centre

THE COUNTERFEIT STONES Sat 29 April, The Robin, Bilston

PRIMORDIAL GENERAL MAYHEM 2023 Sat 29 April, KK's Steel Mill, Wolverhampton

TERRORVISION + HEADSTICKS Sat 29 April, The Sugar Mill, Stoke-on-Trent

THE ROCKET MAN - ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE Sat 29 April, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

MEET ON THE LEDGE - PINK FLOYD TRIBUTE Sat 29 April, Lichfield Guildhall

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN' Sat 29 April, Lichfield Garrick

THE SMITHS ARE DEAD! Sat 29 April, The Hub at St Mary's, Lichfield

AIN'T NO DISCO Sat 29 April, The Feathers Inn, Lichfield

THE REVIEW Sat 29 April, Albert's Shed, Southwater, Telford

NAVI - MICHAEL JACKSON TRIBUTE Sat 29 April, Telford Theatre

FLEETWOOD MAD Sat 29 April, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY Sun 30 April, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

MAN MADE HELL + KICK THE CLOWN + SAKI + PORTSIDE Sun 30 April, 45Live, Kidderminster

DIRTY DC - AC/DC Sun 30 April, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

THE CHRIS SLADE TIMELINE Sun 30 April, The Robin, Bilston

BARRY STEELE - THE ROY ORBISON AND TRAVELLING WILBURYS STORY Sun 30 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Classical Music

CBSO: CARMINA BURANA Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Mari Eriksmoen (soprano), Mathias Rexroth (tenor), Thomas E. Bauer (baritone), CBSO Chorus & University of Birmingham Voices. Programme includes Panufnik Sinfonia Sacra, 22 & Orff's Carmina Burana, 65, Thurs 27 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

CBSO CENTRE STAGE: CELLO ENSEMBLE Programme includes works by Grieg, Rossini & Tchaikovsky, Fri 28 April, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

PAVEL HAAS QUARTET Featuring Veronika Jarůšková & Marek Zwiebel (violins), Dana Zemstov (viola), Peter Jarůšek (cello). Programme includes works by Schubert & Dvorák, Fri 28 April, Birmingham Town Hall

PHOENIX SINGERS: THE ULTIMATE MESSIAH Featuring Gemma King (soprano), Oliver Gerrish (counter-tenor), Philip O'Connor (tenor), Piran Legg (bass). Clare Horgan directs, Sat 29 April, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

CBSO BENEVOLENT FUND CONCERT Featuring Kazuki Yamada (conductor), Alison Balsom (trumpet) & Freddy Kempf (piano). Programme includes works by Tchaikovsky & Shostakovich, Sun 30 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

Comedy

MATT RIFE Wed 26 April, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

JOE LYCETT & FRIENDS Wed 26 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

PAUL SMITH Wed 26 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON, LINDSEY SANTORO & IGNACIO LOPEZ Thurs 27 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

EMMANUEL SONUBI Thurs 27 April, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham

CARL HUTCHINSON Thurs 27 April, Stourbridge Town Hall

VITTORIO ANGELONE Fri 28 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham



ROB BECKETT & JOSH WIDDICOMBE'S PARENTING HELL LIVE Fri 28 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

TOMMY SANDHU, RAJ POOJARA, TEJ DHUTIA & KAT B Fri 28 April, The Rep,

Birmingham

SARAH JOHNSON, JACK GLEADOW & DAVE TWENTYMAN Fri 28 April, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton upon Trent

LINDSEY SANTORO, IGNACIO LOPEZ, LOU CONRAN & ROB ROUSE Fri 28 - Sat 29 April, The Glee Club, Birmingham

MUHSIN YESILADA, NABIL ABDULRASHID, AATIF NAWAZ & FATHIYA SALEH Sat 29 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

KANE BROWN Sat 29 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

BEN NORRIS, JACK GLEADOW, JAMES COOK & COMIC TBC Sun 30 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Theatre

THE COMMITMENTS Nigel Pivaro stars as Da in Roddy Doyle's record-breaking musical, which features over 20 soul classics performed live on stage, Mon 24 - Sat 29 April, Birmingham Hippodrome

TITANIC THE MUSICAL Thom Sutherland's acclaimed production is based on real people aboard the most legendary ship in the world... Mon 24 - Sat 29 April, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

HOME, I'M DARLING Laura Wade's award-winning comedy about one woman's quest to be the perfect 1950s housewife, Tues 25 - Sat 29 April, The Alexandra, Birmingham



THE LAST OF THE HAUSSMANS Stoke Repertory Theatre present Stephen Beresford's comic portrait of a family fast losing its grip, Tues 25 - Sat 29 April, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

SWEENEY TODD Amateur version presented by Curtain Call Theatre Company, Tues 25 - Sat 29 April, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

ONE OF THEM ONES Pentabus Theatre present a new play about two siblings living in a rural community, trying to get their heads around gender identity, Wed 26 April, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE Three actors take on various roles in a new version of Robert Louis Stevenson's gothic novel, Wed 26 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

SECONDARY CAUSE OF DEATH Tower

Players present Peter Gordon's Agatha Christie spoof, which follows the incompetent Inspector Pratt as he brings mayhem and confusion to his latest case, Thurs 27 - Sat 29 April, The Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock

Kids Shows

TO THE MOON AND BACK Concrete Youth present an intergalactic sensory theatre show exploring space, adventure and the importance of family, Fri 28 April, Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham



HANSEL & GRETEL An imaginative reworking of the children's classic, Fri 28 - Sat 29 April, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Dance

PROPEL DANCE: THE SNOW QUEEN The UK's first all-wheelchair dance company present a reimagined version of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale, Thurs 27 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton



JOSS ARNOTT DANCE: TRIPLE BILL Featuring works by international choreographers Alice Klock and Florian Lochner (FLOCK), Anthony Missen (Company Chameleon) and Joss Arnott, Fri 28 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

U.DANCE WEST MIDLANDS An evening 'full of vibrant and exciting dance genres and themes', performed by some of the best young talent from across the West Midlands, Sat 29 April, Patrick Studio, Birmingham Hippodrome

THE BULL AND THE MOON DeNada Dance Theatre present a 'fun, fiery and magical performance' fusing contemporary, flamenco and theatre to tell a story about the importance of family, LGBTQ+ inclusivity and being oneself, Sat 29 April, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

Light Entertainment

BEYOND THE BARRICADE Musical theatre concert featuring principal performers from Les Miserables, Thurs 27 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

HOLLY STARS: NIGHTMARE NEIGHBOUR Ninety-minute stand-up special supported by Drag King Richard Energy, Fri 28 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

ELVIS DEAD Cult classic horror movie Evil Dead 2 reinterpreted through the songs of Elvis, Fri 28 - Sat 29 April, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

QUEENZ Drag extravaganza where death-dropping divas slay some of the biggest hits of all time, Sun 30 April, Lichfield Garrick

GAIETY FESTIVAL Multi-stage festival bringing together some of the biggest West End and Broadway stars for a day packed with musical theatre performances and experiences, Sun 30 April, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire

Events

WWE LIVE See your favourite WWE superstars in action, including Bobby Lashley, Seth Freakin' Rollins, Matt Riddle, Kevin Owens, AJ Styles, Finn Balor, Bianca Belair and Bayley, Wed 26 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

THE ORIGINAL HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS Your favourite Globetrotter stars display their amazing basketball skills and outrageous athleticism, Sat 29 April, Utilita Arena Birmingham

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAKE-UP MASTERCLASS Learn how to create bruises, scars and cuts for the stage, Sat 29 April, Crewe Lyceum Theatre

EASTER STAGE SHOW Join Mr Cadbury's Parrot on his swashbuckling adventure to find the golden egg in this brand-new live show, Sat 29 - Sun 30 April, Cadbury World, Bournville, Birmingham

VINTAGE TEA DANCE Event combining fun and easy-to-follow dance lessons from instructors with a home-made afternoon tea, Sat 29 - Sun 30 April, National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire

DRAWN Featuring local designers, illustrators, artists and creators, Sat 29 - Sun 30 April, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings

THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD FESTIVAL Featuring celebrity-chef demos, an artisan market, street-food stalls, bars and more, Sat 29 April - Mon 1 May, Trentham Estate, Staffordshire

SWINGAMAJIG 2023 Festival celebrating 10 years of Swingamajig



DeNada Dance: The Bull And The Moon - Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

with music, dance and cabaret, Sun 30 April, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Hall, Dudley

LMA'S MODEL MANIA A day out for all the family, themed around aircraft modelling, Sun 30 April, Royal Air Force Museum Midlands, Cosford

SOUL MEDICINE FESTIVAL A retreat day, educational event and music festival rolled into one, Sun 30 April, Himley

Shrewsbury Cantata Choir

Maurice Duruflé - Requiem
Gabriel Fauré - Requiem



Conducted by Anthony Coupe

Gemma King - Soprano

Paul Carr - Organ

Penny Robin-Riddering - Harp

Sylvie Reverdy - Cello

Saturday, 22nd April 2023 at 7:30pm
United Reformed Church, Shrewsbury

Tickets: £15 (under-18 and unwaged free)

From choir members, via our website or at the door

www.shrewsburycantatachoir.org.uk

Reg. charity no. 1119506

This month's competitions span a broad spectrum of things to see, do and enjoy! Enter now at whatsonlive.co.uk and be in with a chance of bagging one of these fab prizes...



Four tickets to see Unexpected Twist

We have four tickets to give away for contemporary new musical Unexpected Twist when it shows at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Tuesday 16 May. Find out more about the show on page 27.

Competition closes Tuesday 9 May



A family pass to Cadbury World

Cadbury World has Easter fun cracked this year, with entertainment and an assortment of chocolatey experiences for visitors of all ages, and we have a family pass (four tickets) to give away.

Competition closes Tuesday 11 April



Four tickets to The Bear Grylls Adventure

We're giving one lucky family the chance to climb, fly and zip their way through the holidays at the ultimate indoor activity centre, based at Birmingham's NEC.

Competition closes Friday 28 May



A pair of tickets to The SpongeBob Musical

SpongeBob SquarePants takes centre stage in 'an all-singing, all-dancing, deep-sea pearl of a show', and we have two tickets for the production at Birmingham Hippodrome on Thursday 13 April.

Competition closes Tuesday 11 April



A pair of weekend tickets to Mello Festival

With over 100 acts across four stages, with the likes of Aston Merrygold, Blue, Fleur East (pictured) and Reef performing, Mello Festival is back in Upton-upon-Severn this May Bank Holiday (26-28 May).

Competition closes Monday 15 May



Four tickets to Heal Festival

Over 80 performers will descend on Shrewsbury's West Mid Showground from 30 June - 2 July. Line-up includes The Enemy (pictured), CAST, The Slow Readers Club and The Dub Pistols.

Competition closes Monday 19 June

For your chance to WIN! with What's On visit whatsonlive.co.uk

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SHREWSBURY

SHROPSHIRE'S BIGGEST LIVE MUSIC & EVENTS VENUE

THE TOTAL STONE ROSES
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SAT 1 APRIL

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chemical dance

tribute to the chemical brothers

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

DAFT PUNK EXPERIENCE

FRI 7 APRIL

DAVE HEMINGWAY OF THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH & THE HOUSEMARTINS

Sunbirds

TOUR 2023

FRIDAY 14 APRIL

R&B BLITZERS

A CELEBRATION OF 50'S & 60'S R&B

SATURDAY 16 APRIL

BEYONCE EXPERIENCE

MONSTA BOY FEAT DENZEE

PERFORMING GARLAND BOYD'S HIT 'I'M SORRY'

MC IBZ

ASHLEY MASON

DJ FEVER

Meat Live

MEAT LOAF'S GREATEST HITS LIVE!

FEAT. TV'S CRAIG HALFORD

BACK BY DEMAND!

SATURDAY 6 MAY 2023

EUROPHORIA

THE GLAMOUR OF EUROVISION

THE EUROVISION HIT SONGS BY THESE ARTISTS PERFORMED LIVE:

AGBA • BUKKI FODJ • KATHINA O'NEILL • LUI • SAM RYDER • LOREEN • CHINA • BROTHERS OF MAN • SANDIE SHAIN • DUNCAN LAURENCE • CONCHITA • SODOR • BOBBYSOX

WEDNESDAY 10 MAY

COLDPLACE

The World's Leading Tribute to Coldplay

Thanks for flying the Coldplay flag. Coldplace are pure quality Phil Harvey (Coldplay)

FRI 12 MAY

DIRECT FROM THE WEST END

MULTI-AWARD WINNING KELLY ORLEN

The Dolly Show

SAT 13 MAY

CELEBRATING THE LIFE & MUSIC OF DOLLY PARTON

TAKE THAT PARTY!

SAT 20 MAY

The Gary Barlow Tribute

Dan Hadfield as Gary Barlow

"His Brilliant" - Gary Barlow

THE BEST PINK TRIBUTE IN THE WORLD

BACK BY DEMAND!

Vicky Jackson

TRIBUTE ARTIST & HER FULL LIVE BAND!

FRI 26 MAY

MASSAOKE 80s Live

SAT 3 JUNE

MR BLUE SKY DON'T BRING ME DOWN LIVIN' THING TELEPHONE LINE SWEET TALKIN' WOMAN EVIL WOMAN SHINE A LITTLE LOVE TURN TO STONE HOLD ON TIGHT

80s AGAIN

THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO JEFF SYMME AND THE ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA

FRI 9 JUNE 2023

THE SUPERSKAS

PLUS A SKA ROOFTOP PARTY!

SAT 10 JUNE

THE INCREDIBLE *Learn to Love* WITH BILLY LYNN

Celine

FRI 16 JUNE

Gordon Henderson as **ELVIS**

THE KING'S VOICE

SAT 17 JUNE

QUEEN NIGHT LIVE!

THE GREATEST HITS SHOW

FRIDAY 23 JUNE

SAT 1 JULY

TIKTOK SENSATION **SHREK RAVE UK**

DONKEY WE'RE HAVING A RAVE!

1 JULY - SHREWSBURY - BUTTER MARKET

The Mod

PLUS MOD OUTDOOR TERRACE PARTY

THE MODS' GREATEST HITS

FRIDAY 14 JULY

THE WEST END DINING EXPERIENCE RETURNS TO SHREWSBURY BY DEMAND!

FAULTY TOWERS

Original

21/22 JULY

the Dining Experience

SUNDAY 30 JULY 2023

Princess Party

WITH Ariel & Belle

KEITH BELLER DAVID CHISNALL

YVONNA BULLYARD STEVE BEATON

MELVYN KING EMMA PATTON

BEAU DREAVES JOSH PROCK

LISA AGSTON JANEY MARBLE

THE SHOWDOWN IN SHREWSBURY

SAT 5 AUGUST 2023

TICKETS NOW ON SALE! JANEY MARBLE

HARRY STYLES

ALL DAY OUTDOOR PARTY

SAT 19 AUGUST

THE CHRIS SLADE TIMELINE

FROM AC/DC

FRI 1 SEPT

LIVE IN CONCERT

REBORN GOLD PRESENTS

BOB MARLEY vs UB40

A REBORN GOLD TRIBUTE TO THE REGGAE LEGENDS!

COULD UB LOVED?

SAT 2 SEPT

THE UB40 EXPERIENCE

THE MARLEY EXPERIENCE

'THE ULTIMATE ALL DAY FEEL GOOD PARTY'

THE 90's REVIVAL TOUR

SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 4PM-9PM

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'THE DEFINITIVE OASIS TRIBUTE BAND'

FRI 15 SEPT

THE WORLD'S No.1 GUNS N ROSES LIVE TRIBUTE

"OUTSTANDING"

GUNS 2 ROSES

FRI 22 SEPT

MASSAOKE PRESENTS

"BEST NIGHT OUT EVER!"

SING THE MUSICALS

THE LIVE BAND SING-ALONG SPECTACULAR

SAT 23 SEPT

SHOWADY WADDY

50th Anniversary Tour

FRI 22 DEC

3 STEPS TO HEAVEN

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9 JULY



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